

RICE UNIVERSITY

**Late Eighteenth-Century English Violin Concertos:
A Genre in Transition**

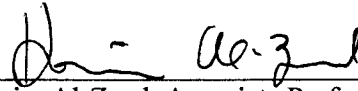
by

Eric Siu

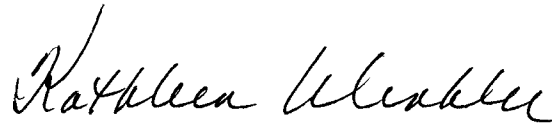
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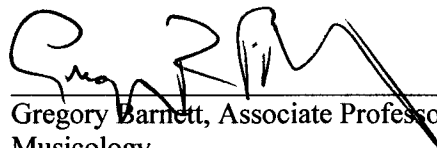
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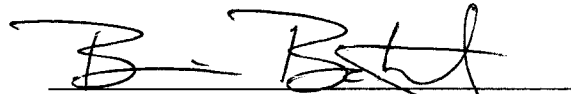
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ABSTRACT

Late Eighteenth-Century English Violin Concertos:
A Genre in Transition

By

Eric Siu

Classical violin concertos by English composers are relatively obscure nowadays, as the genre is largely monopolized by Mozart's last three concertos. This study explores the compositional and violinistic traits of ten English concertos from the late eighteenth century, as well as the social and cultural circumstances under which they were written. These concertos are challenging violinistically, suggesting that they were primarily intended as virtuosic showpieces. In addition, a number of the concertos display musical eccentricities that hint at the quirky personalities of their composers. In some respects, these concertos are unadventurous, particularly in terms of harmony and thematic contrasts. However, they contain a number of unique compositional features that are worthy of our attention. The most notable of these is the incorporation of Baroque features in a large number of the concertos, despite their general adherence to the new galant style. All evidence suggests that the two styles were combined deliberately as a compositional technique, and this is perhaps the most distinctly "English" characteristic of these concertos.

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INTRODUCTION

The number of Classical violin concertos that are regularly played today is staggeringly few, and stands in stark contrast to the vast number of Baroque, Romantic, and twentieth-century concertos that are available. When one speaks of Classical violin concertos, those by Viennese composers Franz Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart spring immediately to mind. Of these, however, only the final three by Mozart can be said to be staples of the violin repertoire. Comparatively little is known about the remainder of the Viennese concertos, and even less is known about concertos from other countries. This emphasis is manifested in the repertoire lists for many of today's competitions and auditions. While performers are often given a free choice of Romantic and twentieth-century concertos, the options for Classical concertos are substantially fewer, with only Mozart's third, fourth, and fifth concertos being permissible in most cases. The vast majority of violinists accept this partiality unquestioningly, arguing that it is justified by the poor quality of alternative concertos. This assertion, however, is for most people a claim unsubstantiated by any actual experience with the repertoire.

Digging a little below the surface, one finds that important, albeit lesser-known, violin concertos also emanated from France and Italy. Although French composers were initially slow in taking up the genre, the French violin concerto blossomed towards the end of the century with the founding of the so-called "French Violin School," exemplified primarily by the twenty-nine concertos by Paris-based violinist Giovanni Battiste Viotti. These concertos had a significant impact on violin writing at the time - Beethoven's violin concerto, one of the most frequently performed violin concertos today, was heavily influenced by Viotti's concertos.¹ Although rarely

¹ Boris Schwarz, "Beethoven and the French Violin School," *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 44, No. 4 (October, 1958): 431-447.

heard on today's concert stages, Viotti's concertos continue to be used intermittently as pedagogical materials. Italian exponents of the violin concerto include Pietro Nardini and Giuseppe Tartini. Both continued the celebrated Italian concerto tradition that began in the early eighteenth century with composers Arcangelo Corelli and Giuseppe Torelli.

In contrast, English violin concertos from the late eighteenth century are today relatively obscure and neglected. In fact, English Classical music receives so little attention nowadays that most would struggle to name a single English composer from this period, let alone one who wrote violin concertos particularly. Paradoxically, however, England was at the time a prosperous country with a bustling music scene. Musical entertainment was highly sought-after by the wealthy public, to an extent unmatched by any other country in Europe. The quality and diversity of London's concert life, particularly in the last two decades of the century, was astounding, and encouraged eminent musicians from all over the continent to settle in the city. Furthermore, the concerto genre was hugely popular at the time, and was regularly used by instrumentalists to flaunt technical proficiency and virtuosity. The paucity of concertos by native English composers, then, seems illogical, and contradicts the country's prevalent social and cultural circumstances.

The number of extant Classical English violin concertos is few - only thirteen concertos by five composers have survived to the present day.² These concertos are generally up-to-date with the new Classical idiom, and conform largely to the prevailing structural conventions for concertos. Furthermore, the concertos are technically challenging, which indicates that the English composers were highly proficient on the instrument. In fact, the technical difficulties of the English concertos easily surpass those of the Viennese concertos.

² Unfortunately, only ten concertos by four composers were available for this study. Despite his best efforts, the author was unable to acquire the three concertos written by John Abraham Fisher.

Musically, the English concertos lack the innovations found in the Viennese concertos, particularly in terms of harmony and thematic contrast, and this is perhaps one of the main reasons for their neglect. This lack of innovation, however, does not mean that the English concertos are devoid of musical interest. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Musical interest in the English concertos is sometimes quite substantial, but is often created in unique ways that could be viewed as distinctly English: whereas innovation was of primary concern for most continental composers, the English composers had a tendency to look to the past for inspiration, resulting in subtle Baroque elements being embedded in these outwardly classical works. While no one would argue that the English concertos form the pinnacle of Classical violin repertoire, this conflation of styles creates musical idiosyncrasies that make the concertos worthy of our attention.

This document is divided into three sections. The first section, titled “Musical Life of Eighteenth-Century England,” sets the scene in which the English composers lived and worked. It begins with an overview of the social and historical aspects of musical life in eighteenth-century England, followed by brief biographies of the English composers who contributed to the violin concerto repertoire: Samuel Wesley, Thomas Linley junior, James Brooks, Thomas Shaw, and John Abraham Fisher.

In the second part, a comprehensive analysis of the English concertos is conducted. After a brief historical and formal overview of violin concertos before the Classical era, the English concertos are analyzed in regards to form, harmony, orchestration, and texture. Where appropriate, the concertos are compared with contemporaneous musical trends on the continent. Individual differences between the English concertos are also examined; the English composers

under discussion hail from a diverse range of backgrounds, a fact that is manifested in many of their concertos.

Part three of the document involves a discussion of the violinistic traits of the English concertos. The late eighteenth century was a transitional period for the construction of violins and bows, as well as for the development of violin technique. The implications of this for the English concertos are thoroughly explored in this chapter.

Current scholarship on Classical violin repertoire is almost entirely focused on the Viennese works by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Until we have a better understanding of the contributions of their contemporaries, however, it is somewhat inappropriate for us to perform these admittedly great works to the exclusion of all others. It is my hope that this study will fill a small part of this gap in scholarship, and inspire future research on this undeservedly neglected area of music history.

PART ONE

Musical Life in Late Eighteenth-Century England

A Land without Music – Fact or Myth?

The period following the death of Henry Purcell (1659-1695) is often seen as the “Dark Ages” of English Music.¹ While English composers such as Edward Elgar (1857-1934), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), and Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) are known to almost all music aficionados, most would be hard-pressed to name an English composer of note from the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. The foreign perception that England was a musical “wasteland” during this period was so strong that the term *Das Land ohne Musik*, or the land without music, was often used to describe the country. The origin of the term is ambiguous, although it is probably best known as the title of a 1914 book by German musicologist Oscar Schmitz, in which he lamented the poor quality of English music and opined that England was the only cultured nation without its own music.² Schmitz’s sentiments were shared by Heinrich Heine, who remarked in an 1840 article for the *Gazette d’Augsbourg* that “These people [the English] have no ear, either for rhythm or music, and their unnatural passion for piano playing and singing is thus all the more repulsive. Nothing on earth is more terrible than English music, save English painting.”³

While it is true that England failed to produce a truly great composer between the times of Purcell and Elgar, eighteenth-century England is far from the musical vacuum that it is often

¹ Stanley Sadie, *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century England*, Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, 85th Sess. (1958 - 1959), 17.

² David Wyn Jones, ed., *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), 1.

³ Ibid.

imagined to be. Even a cursory examination will reveal that its quality as well as quantity of musical activity was astounding. Towards the end of the century, London's musical life had a vitality and diversity that was unparalleled anywhere else in Europe. Patrons of sufficient wealth and social standing could choose from a large number of musical entertainments, including subscription concerts, Italian operas, masques or pantomimes, and summer garden concerts.⁴ Amateur music-making was also abundant. Members of the working class, who were usually not welcome at public concerts, often satisfied their musical desire by singing catches and glees with friends in the local tavern.⁵

Public Concerts

Given the immense popularity of music, it is not surprising that eighteenth-century London was saturated with concerts. In fact, London is arguably the birthplace of the public concert: the first major concerts in Europe were organized by John Banister at his Whitefriars Music School in London in 1672.⁶ Banister's venture was quickly imitated by others, and by the mid-eighteenth century, the public concert had become an integral part of the city's musical life, sometimes surpassing even the opera in its artistic and social prestige.⁷

The primary reason for the concert's rapid proliferation was the healthy state of the English economy. London had become one of the most financially successful cities in the world,

⁴ Wyn Jones, *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 2.

⁷ Nicholas Temperley, et al. "London (i)." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/16904>.

and its resultant wealth generated a large upper class, eager to patronize concerts, if only to flaunt their social status. The lack of court patronage in music was another factor, as it forced court musicians to supplement their income by other means.⁸ The commercialization of music was thus more rapid in England than in other European countries.

There were four primary types of public concert in late eighteenth-century London that involved the performance of concertos: subscription concerts, benefit concerts, oratorios, and summer garden concerts.⁹ Subscription concerts began to appear in the early eighteenth century, and rapidly proliferated in the 1750s when the Italian opera went on hiatus. By 1792, the number of competing subscription series in the city had reached unprecedented levels. A contemporary newspaper article described the situation as follows:

There are no fewer than sixteen public Subscription Concerts at this moment going forward in the metropolis, besides the various select parties with which it abounds. Each of those has a distinguished leader and performers of great eminence. This at least will prove to the world our musical *rage*, we with it could also shew our musical *knowledge* and *taste*.¹⁰

Subscription concerts were held primarily in London's West End between January and June. Each series contained between twelve and twenty concerts, with twelve becoming the norm

⁸ H. Diack Johnstone and Roger Fiske, eds., *Music in Britain: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.), 34.

⁹ Thomas B. Milligan, *The Concerto and London's Musical Culture in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

towards the end of the century.¹¹ Of the various types of concerts in the city, subscription concerts were the most prestigious and socially exclusive, and featured only fully professional musicians, mostly with foreign backgrounds and considerable international reputations. Patrons for subscription concerts were usually the nobility and gentry, to whom most advertisements were explicitly addressed.

A number of techniques were used to promote prestige and exclusivity at subscription concerts. Ticket prices were often elevated to exorbitant levels, thereby keeping out all but the wealthiest patrons. Some series forbade the purchase of single tickets, forcing patrons to pay up to six guineas - a huge sum of money in those days - for a season ticket.¹² Social screening was practiced in at least one series – the Bach-Abel concerts operated a system whereby gentlemen were required to apply to a committee of aristocratic ladies for admittance.¹³ In addition, star performers often had built into their contracts a restriction against appearances with rival concert organizations, thus enhancing exclusivity by restricting the availability of the performer.¹⁴

Popular subscription series include the Bach-Abel concerts, founded in 1765 by German composers Johann Christian Bach and Carl Friedrich Abel. Not surprisingly, the series featured mostly Austro-German music, with particular emphasis on the founders' own compositions. After Bach's death in January 1782, Abel was able to sustain the concerts for just one more season before they were succeeded by the Professional Concert, directed by German violinist Wilhelm Cramer.¹⁵ The Salomon series, founded by violinist Johann Peter Salomon, was also

¹¹ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 6.

highly-regarded. Salomon's series enjoyed a surge in popularity in 1791 when he lured Franz Joseph Haydn to London and secured exclusive rights to his newest symphonies. The Professional Concert responded by recruiting Haydn's pupil Ignaz Pleyel, but was unable to compete and folded after the 1793 season.¹⁶

The term "benefit concert" in the eighteenth century referred to a concert sponsored by a single composer in the hope of making a monetary profit for himself. However, these concerts were not solo recitals, but rather involved an orchestra as well as a number of the sponsoring composer's friends and colleagues as soloists. Despite being less prestigious, benefit concerts were largely identical to subscription concerts in terms of organization, albeit with a slight emphasis in programming towards the sponsoring composer. Occasionally, benefit concerts in the modern sense, where the proceeds went towards a charitable organization, were held. An example of this is the New Musical Fund, founded in 1786, which aimed to assist retired musicians and widows and orphans of musicians.¹⁷

Oratorios were performed in playhouses during Lent when operas were forbidden. They were less elite and exclusive than subscription and benefit concerts, as lower ticket prices attracted more diverse audiences, particularly among the city's middle class.¹⁸ Handel's oratorios, such as *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabaeus*, were especially popular. Many English composers, such as Thomas Arne, Samuel Arnold and Thomas Linley junior, also attempted the genre, but were generally unable to compete with Handel's masterpieces, even after the German composer's death in 1759. Instrumental concertos, of both the Baroque and Classical variety, were often performed in between acts of oratorios.

¹⁶ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 28.

During the summer, there were no subscription or benefit concerts in London. Instead, musical entertainment took the form of garden concerts. These were informal affairs where patrons were free to stroll among the flowers and drink tea while listening to music.¹⁹ Of all the concert types discussed thus far, the garden concerts were the cheapest to attend, and therefore featured the most mingling between classes. However, members of the working class were generally not welcome, even if they could afford tickets. Concertos for wind and string instruments had an important place in garden concerts, as no pianoforte concertos were possible due to its unsuitability for outdoor performances.²⁰

In addition to the public concerts described above, private concerts were also plentiful. These informal events were usually held in private homes in the presence of a small number of invited guests. They predominately featured amateurs, although organizers with sufficient means would often invite a small number of professionals to serve as star attractions.²¹

Concert programs in the early eighteenth century took a variety of forms. However, by the mid-century, a clear pattern had emerged: a two-part program of between ten and twelve items, with alternating vocal and instrumental works, including two concertos on average.²² The following advertisement for the Professional Concert's opening night in 1790 shows a typical concert program from this period:²³

¹⁹ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 11.

²⁰ Ibid., 12.

²¹ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 45.

²² Ibid., 101.

²³ *The Times of London*, February 8, 1790.

PROFESSIONAL CONCERT,
HANOVER SQUARE.

THE COMMITTEE most respectfully acquaint the Nobility and Gentry, that their
FIRST CONCERT

Will be on Monday next, the 15th Instant.

ACT I. Overture, Haydn. Quartetto, Pleyel. Song, Miss Cantelo. Sonata Piano Forte, Mr. Dance. Song, Signora Storace. Concerto Violin, Mr. Cramer.

ACT II. New Grand Overture, MS. Haydn. Song, Miss Cantelo. Concerto Hautboy, Mr. Parke. Song, Signora Storace. New Overture, MS. Girovitz.

The Committee have likewise engaged Signor **MAR-CHESI** and Madame **MARA**, who are expected in London the beginning of March.

Subscriptions received at Five Guineas for Twelve Concerts, and Tickets delivered at Ransom, Moreland and Hammersley's, No. 57, Pall Mall.

The Ladies Tickets transferrable to Ladies, and Gentlemen's to Gentlemen.

The Ladies' Tickets are Red, and Gentlemen's Black.

Those Ladies and Gentlemen who mean to honour this Concert with their countenance, are requested to take out their Subscriptions as early as possible, in order to prevent disappointments, as the number of Subscribers is limited.

Each concert was approximately three hours long.²⁴ However, popular movements were often encored, which sometimes added as much as an extra hour.²⁵ Contrary to modern-day convention, audiences were not expected to remain seated in silence. Rather, they were free to move around and socialize during the performance, as well as to come and go as they pleased.

After years of exponential growth, music suffered a precipitous decline in London after 1795. The number of concerts declined sharply, and many concert series folded. The primary causes for this were poor harvests and the French Revolutionary War, both of which put severe economic strain on the city.²⁶ In addition, Haydn's departure from London in 1795 had a profound effect, as there were subsequently no composers of comparable stature in the city until

²⁴ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 101.

²⁵ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 8.

²⁶ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 68.

Felix Mendelssohn's frequent visits beginning in 1829. The public's enthusiasm for music, especially instrumental music, waned as a result.

Foreign Composers and their Effect

Foreign composers enjoyed substantial success in eighteenth-century London, which is not entirely surprising since the city was at the time one of the most cosmopolitan in the world. However, the extent to which they dominated the English music scene at the expense of native composers is somewhat unexpected, especially considering the prominence of earlier English composers such as Henry Purcell, William Byrd, Thomas Tallis, John Taverner, and John Dunstable. George Frederic Handel and Francesco Geminiani, from Germany and Italy respectively, were the leading composers in the first half of the eighteenth century. Important composers in the second half of the century include German composers Johann Christian Bach, Carl Frederic Abel, and Franz Joseph Haydn. Native English composers, by contrast, received very little attention.

The primary reason for this saturation of foreigners was lure of substantial financial reward. London audiences, increasingly status-conscious and selective in their musical tastes, were eager to use their newfound wealth to attract the best musicians in the world. As a result, professional musicians of good stature could command higher fees in London than they could elsewhere in Europe. Johann Mattheson, writing for *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (1713), remarked that "He who at the present time wants to make a profit out of his music betakes himself to England."²⁷ A comparison of Haydn's finances before and during his time in London perfectly illustrates this financial discrepancy. Before he departed for London in 1790, he was

²⁷ Johnstone and Fiske, *Music in Britain*, 18.

enjoying a salary of 1,400 Gulden per year from his patron Prince Esterhazy in Vienna. During his four years in London, he earned a total of 24,000 Gulden (about 2,400 pounds), or about four times his previous income.²⁸

In addition, England was severely hindered by a lack of support for aspiring native musicians. Despite its thriving concert life, England lacked an established music education system in the eighteenth century, resulting in a void of native musical talent that had to be filled with foreigners. While aspiring musicians on the continent were usually able to study at well-established conservatories, those from England were rarely afforded such opportunities. Although a few Englishmen were fortunate enough to be apprenticed to old masters, the overwhelming majority had to make do with self-learning from printed instruction manuals.²⁹ Unfortunately, many of these manuals were poorly written, and were sometimes so bad as to be virtually incomprehensible.³⁰ Well-written treatises, such as *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751) by Francesco Geminiani (an Italian, but resident in London), which still attracts much attention today, were rare. Children with substantial musical talent and wealthy parents were often sent abroad to study.³¹ Thomas Linley junior, who studied violin and composition with Pietro Nardini in Florence in his teens, was one such example.

This influx of foreign musicians had numerous effects on the city, both positive and negative. The most observable positive effect was one of cultural enrichment, as imported musicians and compositions added welcome variety to the city's musical life. In addition, the gathering of so many world-class musicians no doubt resulted in a rise of technical standards.

²⁸ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 1.

²⁹ Johnstone and Fiske, *Music in Britain*, 4.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

Unfortunately, this foreign influx also hindered native musicians, severely limiting their opportunities for career advancement.³² Audiences around the city, particularly status-conscious members of the upper class, overwhelmingly favored foreign musicians due to the novelty and prestige associated with them, and considered native musicians unfashionable solely on account of their nationality. Public concerts, especially those in London, rarely featured English composers, despite occasional mention in the press of their neglect. This preference for foreigners had been noted as early as 1711, when music critic Addison remarked that:

Our Notions of Musick are so very uncertain, that we do not know what it is we like; only, in general, we are transported with any thing that is not *English*: So it be of foreign Growth, let it be *Italian, French, or High-Dutch*, it is the same thing. In short, our *English* Musick is quite rooted out...³³

The following concert review from 1791 perfectly summarizes the English attitude towards native musicians:

Hindmarsh performed a concerto on the violin in a very capital style, exhibiting great taste and execution. If this performer had been imported from *Italy* instead of being mere English breed, his talents would have procured him a distinguished reputation.³⁴

³² This is very similar to the current situation in the Barclays English Premier League, where the import of foreigners improves technical standards, but limits opportunities for aspiring English players. This has severely hindered the performance of the English national team in international tournaments.

³³ Johnstone and Fiske, *Music in Britain*, 34.

³⁴ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 2.

London's overwhelming preference for foreigners had a profound effect on the English musical style. Just as some English composers were beginning to develop their own distinctive style around the middle of the century, foreign compositions started to infiltrate London's concert life, which suppressed local creativity as composers began to imitate the newly-imported styles.³⁵ Although some composers tried to retain a sense of English individuality by including characteristic movements (such as the march, jig, or gavotte) or by incorporating traditional English melodies, the majority of English symphonic works were clearly derivatives of imported idioms, particularly those of German origin. French visitor Pierre Grosley remarked that although "the English flatter themselves that they have a national music, it was in fact a dialect of German music, itself derived from the Italian."³⁶

Ancient vs. Modern

One of the unique characteristics of English musical life in the eighteenth century was that Baroque repertoire (or "ancient" repertoire in the terminology of the time) continued to be performed alongside Classical (or "modern") repertoire, as large factions of the public remained loyal to the Baroque style despite the rapidly changing fashion. Baroque composers whose works continued to be popular even into the late eighteenth century include Handel, Corelli, and Geminiani. While old operas such as those by Jean-Baptiste Lully were occasionally performed

³⁵ McVeigh, *Concert Life in London*, 124.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

in France, England had no rival in the late eighteenth century in the amount and diversity of ancient music performed.³⁷

This continued penchant for Baroque repertoire was so strong that there were concert series, such as the Concert of Ancient Music and the Academy of Ancient Music, that were dedicated to the performance of old music. The Concert of Ancient Music, founded in 1776 by the Earl of Sandwich, presented concerts of Baroque and pre-Baroque repertoire in London's West End.³⁸ The series also sought to promote music by native English composers, which had by then become unfashionable at modern concerts. The Academy of Ancient Music, founded in 1726, began as an amateur music society dedicated to reviving sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sacred music and madrigals. As the century progressed, they transformed into a professional concert series and broadened their scope to include secular Baroque repertoire.³⁹

Those who remained loyal to the Baroque style were primarily the older generation or aristocrats, who found the new galant style to be superficial and continued to patronize Baroque music in order to assume a higher artistic ground.⁴⁰ As the older generation gradually passed away, interest in the Baroque style waned slightly until it was revived in 1784 by the Handel Commemoration, a celebration of Handel's music on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death. To mark the occasion, four gigantic midday concerts of Handel's music were held in Westminster Abbey. These concerts were tremendously successful both artistically and

³⁷ William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 5.

³⁸ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 22.

³⁹ Johnstone and Fiske, *Music in Britain*, 18.

⁴⁰ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 13.

financially. In addition to reviving interest in the Baroque style, the Handel Commemoration also rejuvenated enthusiasm for Handel's compositions, just as his reputation was beginning to fade.

The interest in Baroque music displayed by King George III also contributed to the continued enthusiasm for the old style. When the King began attending the Concert of Ancient Music in 1785, its number of subscribers rose sharply from 258 to 373,⁴¹ suggesting that some people favored the Baroque style not because of musical preference, but because of a desire to emulate those from the highest echelons of society.

Many English composers continued to write in the Baroque style until the end of the century. Although the Baroque concerto grosso had ceased to be written in Italy by 1720 and in Germany by 1740, some English composers were still writing them while Haydn and Mozart were already writing their mature symphonies.⁴² This is unlikely to be due to ignorance of the new style, as modern compositions were frequently performed in London's public concerts.

There were some composers who wrote in both styles concurrently, sometimes even combining them in the same composition. In Thomas Linley junior's oratorio *Song of Moses*, the contrapuntal Baroque style is employed for most of the choruses since it was considered more idiomatic. For the solo arias, however, the galant style is used for its greater virtuosity and increased opportunities for ornamentation.⁴³ This suggests that the two styles are deliberately combined by some composers as a compositional technique.

⁴¹ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 24.

⁴² Wyn Jones, *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10.

Music Outside of London

Another distinctive characteristic of eighteenth-century England was the abundance of music outside of London. Although less diverse than those in London, concerts in provincial cities were plentiful. Most of the important towns and cities had at least one if not two musical societies by mid-century, and many smaller towns and villages enjoyed occasional performances. The most fundamental difference between concerts inside London and those outside of it was that those outside were predominantly amateur. Visitors to these concerts were often invited to pick up an instrument and join in with the orchestra.⁴⁴

As expected, there was a clear correlation between the prosperity of an area and its amount of musical activity. East Anglia was the richest area of England in the eighteenth century, and was therefore brimming with concerts. Bath, a town of approximately thirty-thousand inhabitants in southwest England, was also musically endowed. Bath attracted wealthy visitors from all over the country in the eighteenth century as doctors became convinced of the medicinal effect of the city's public baths, and recommended them as a cure for many ailments.⁴⁵

Bath was unique among the provincial cities in that it had a number of highly competent professional musicians. The most influential of these were the Linley family, who enjoyed a substantial reputation not only in the city, but also throughout the country. Composer and concert director Thomas Linley senior (1733-1795) directed concerts in Bath from the mid-1750s until 1774, during which time he also gave guest solo performances in London. He amassed considerable wealth from his music making, which allowed his son, Thomas Linley junior, to

⁴⁴ Sadie, *Concert Life*, 17.

⁴⁵ The baths were even reputed to have cured a herd of pigs of leprosy (Bowman, 25).

study in Italy for three years. Two other English concerto composers, James Brooks and Thomas Shaw, also hailed from Bath.

The Role of the Concerto in the English Music Society

Instrumental soloists in the eighteenth century were expected to provide their own compositions; in the 1790s, less than ten percent of the solo performances in London involved compositions written by composers other than the solo performers themselves.⁴⁶ There were two genres available to solo performers seeking to write their own compositions: the solo (the English term for a sonata with continuo), and the concerto. Of the two, the concerto gradually established itself as the preferred genre due to its superior projection and brilliance, as well as its comparatively modern musical language and texture.⁴⁷

Violinists featured in London's most prestigious subscription concerts include Felice Giardini (1716-1796), Wilhelm Cramer (1746-1799), Giovanni Giornovich (1747-1804), and in the last decade of the century, Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824), founder of the so-called "French Violin School." All were immigrants from continental Europe. Also attracting attention were child prodigies, such as Franz Clement, and ethnic minorities, such as George Polgreen Bridgetower.⁴⁸ Due to the overwhelming preference for foreign musicians, the performance of English concertos was usually confined to private concerts.

⁴⁶ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 22.

⁴⁷ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 104.

⁴⁸ George Polgreen Bridgetower (1778-1860) was a virtuoso violinist born in Poland to a West Indian father and a European mother. He moved to London in his youth, where he was marketed as "the son of an African Prince."

Virtuosity was a desirable attribute in eighteenth-century concertos, and was often mentioned in favorable concert reviews. Many audience members attended concerts solely to witness the soloists' virtuosic stunts. John Marsh recalled in a 1796 essay that at a recent concert, the cadenza was the only part of the concerto to which the audience paid any attention.⁴⁹

However, over-reliance on virtuosic trickery was sometimes criticized, mainly by music connoisseurs. Violinists in particular were often condemned for using high positions excessively, sacrificing beauty of tone and expression.⁵⁰ This attitude seems to have been more distinct in London than in other European cities. Italian violinist Antonio Lolli (1725-1802) left London in humiliation after he was lambasted by the public for the outrageous acrobatics and empty virtuosity of his concertos,⁵¹ and perhaps for the same reason, Viotti's "London" concertos are technically easier than his earlier "Paris" concertos. The most successful concerto composers were those who sought a middle-ground between virtuosity and expression. Cramer and Giardini were frequently praised in this regard.⁵²

The number of English concertos included in this study is few; only ten concertos written by four different composers have been included. The paucity of Classical English concertos extant today is likely because most of them were not published. Since concertos were mostly written for the composer himself to perform, publication was not necessary. In addition, the technical difficulties of these concertos, which progressively increased throughout the century,

⁴⁹ McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 146.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 144

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁵² *Ibid.*

made them useless for amateur music societies, thus eliminating one of the biggest markets for published scores.⁵³

The Composers

Only five native Classical English composers are known to have written solo violin concertos: Samuel Wesley (1766-1787), Thomas Linley junior (1756-1778), James Brooks (1757/60-1810), Thomas Shaw (c1752-c1830), and John Abraham Fisher (1744-1806). Of these composers, four were from Somerset: Linley, Brooks, and Shaw were from the city of Bath, while Wesley was from nearby Bristol.

Numerous English composers continued to write concertos in the older concerto grosso style, most notably Charles Avison and Charles Wesley. Charles Avison (1709-1770) was a composer, conductor and organist from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He wrote a large number of concerto grossos modeled on Geminiani's examples. Charles Wesley (1757-1834), brother of Samuel Wesley, refused to discard the old Baroque style even as late as the 1780s. All of his compositions were extremely conservative in style, so much so that his brother often referred to him as an "obstinate Handelian."⁵⁴ His *Concerto Grosso in Seven Parts*, written and published in 1782, was one of the last concerto grossos to be written. Since the focus of this study is the Classical solo concerto rather than the old concerto grosso, the works of these Baroque-style composers shall not be discussed.

⁵³ Wyn Jones, *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 12.

⁵⁴ Nicholas Temperley, et al. "Wesley." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/44468pg3>.

Samuel Wesley

Of the five English concerto composers examined in this study, Samuel Wesley was the most prolific. His reputation during his lifetime was chiefly as an organist, but he was also a well-known and highly-respected composer. Unfortunately, his adult career was hindered by constant mental and personal problems, which prevented him from fully building on the considerable promise that he showed in his early career.

Born in Bristol on February 24th 1766, Samuel Wesley was the son of clergyman and noted hymn writer Charles Wesley. He showed prodigious talents at an early age. According to his father, he taught himself to read from a copy of Handel's *Samson* at the age of four, and a year later "had all the recitatives, and choruses of *Samson* and the *Messiah*: both words and notes by heart."⁵⁵ He had his first organ lesson at the age of six, and started playing the violin around the same time. In 1776, he moved permanently to London with his family, and began to give family subscription concerts with his elder brother at the family home in 1779. At these concerts, the Wesley brothers familiarized themselves with a wide variety of styles, as they performed both ancient music (by Handel, Corelli etc.) as well as modern works, including their own compositions.

According to his obituary in *The Times*, Wesley suffered a serious misfortune in 1787 that had a profound effect on the rest of his career.⁵⁶ While walking home one night after visiting a friend, he lost his footing and fell into a building excavation in Snow Hill, severely damaging his skull. To exacerbate the issue, he was not discovered until the morning after, whereupon the doctors strongly advised him to undergo the operation of trepanning - the procedure of cutting a

⁵⁵ Temperley, "Wesley."

⁵⁶ *The London Times*, October 12th, 1837.

small hole in his skull to alleviate the tremendous amount of pressure that was being sustained. Despite the doctor's warnings, Wesley refused. According to the obituary, he regretted this decision, as this head injury was the main cause of constant attacks of depression and nervous irritability that plagued him for the remainder of his life.

In 1793, Wesley married Charlotte Louisa Martin, whom he had known since 1782. Despite going on to have two children together, their marriage was turbulent and unhappy. It survived, however, until 1810, when Wesley was discovered to have impregnated his sixteen-year-old housekeeper Sarah Suter. Wesley then began cohabitating with Sarah and had three more children with her. Wesley's scandalous abandonment of Charlotte for a lowly servant outraged his family. It also caused much damage to his professional reputation and his chances of employment in respectable positions.⁵⁷

The rest of Wesley's career was characterized by sporadic periods of success and productivity interspersed with extended periods of disruption caused by his scandalous private life as well as his mental health problems, including time spent in a private lunatic asylum after he threw himself from a window due to the death of an infant child.⁵⁸ Perhaps one of his most important contributions was his wholehearted efforts in the early nineteenth century in promoting the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, a little-known composer at the time. Wesley's compositions, the largest category of which was Latin Church music, reflect the wide range of influences he was exposed to in his childhood: the "ancient" style of Corelli, Handel and other late Baroque composers, the more "modern" style of J. C. Bach and C. F. Abel, Gregorian chant, and the idioms of continental Roman Catholic Church music.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Philip Olleson, *Samuel Wesley: The Man and His Music*, (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press), 102.

⁵⁸ *The London Times*, October 12th, 1837.

Although Wesley performed on the violin frequently in his youth, his interest in the instrument waned after his teenage years. His seven extant violin concertos were all written between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. They were probably written for the private concerts that the Wesley family ran from their Chesterfield Street home between 1779 and 1785, since this was the precise period when the concertos were written. In addition to these original concertos, Wesley also re-orchestrated a concerto by Italian violinist-composer Giovanni Giornovich between the time of his fourth and fifth concertos in 1782, leaving the solo violin part largely intact but completely rewriting the orchestra parts. The purpose of this project is not entirely clear, but as we shall see later, it had a significant effect on Wesley, as he included some of Giornovich's compositional characteristics in his subsequent concertos.

Thomas Linley Junior

Thomas Linley junior was an exceptionally gifted violinist and composer who suffered a tragically premature death at the age of twenty-two. Born on May 7th 1756 in Bath, Linley quickly became known as the outstanding prodigy in the city. He studied initially with his father Thomas, but when he was taken at the age of seven to noted composer and organist William Boyce, Boyce was so captivated by Linley's precocious talents that he immediately agreed to teach him for five years. Although Linley's musical interests were broad and included singing and dancing, his favorite instrument was always the violin. In 1768, after the end of his five-year term with Boyce, Linley left England for Florence, Italy to study with violinist-composer Pietro Nardini, a pupil of Giuseppe Tartini. While in Florence, he became personally acquainted with Mozart, who had visited the city in 1770. Upon his return from Italy, Linley lived for a few more

⁵⁹ Temperley, "Wesley."

years in Bath before settling in London, where he led the orchestra at Drury Lane and frequently played a concerto between acts of an oratorio. He quickly became known as one of the foremost performers of his day. The *Morning Post* for March 26th 1778 reported that “the band and chorus are remarkably fine, the former led with great judgement by young Mr. Linley, whose excellence also as a solo performer, needs not the aid of panegyric to recommend it.”⁶⁰

In 1778, Linley’s successes came to an abrupt halt as a result of an unfortunate boating accident. Linley went on holiday with his two sisters at the estate of the Duke of Ancaster in Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire. While he was sailing on a lake with two friends, a storm blew up without warning, and capsized their boat. Linley attempted to swim to shore but perished in the attempt. He was buried at Edenham Parish Church on August 11th 1778.⁶¹

Unfortunately, only a small number of Linley’s compositions have survived, as much of his music was thought to have been destroyed by a fire in the Drury Lane Theatre in 1807. He is known to have written over twenty violin concertos, but only one is extant today. The works that have survived, however, show him to be a talented composer. Gwilym Beechey, in his article in remembrance of the composer, describes Linley’s compositions as follows: “It is clear nonetheless from what does survive that he was a gifted melodist with a strong harmonic sense, that he had considerable contrapuntal facility and a remarkable gift as an imaginative orchestrator.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Gwilym Beechey, “Thomas Linley, Junior 1756-1778,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan., 1968): 78.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

James Brooks

James Brooks was a composer and violinist born in Bath in either 1757 or 1760. As a performer, he was an important figure in the West Country, leading the majority of the concerts in Bath in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, as well as making occasional appearances in Bristol and London.

Compared to the considerable reputations of Wesley and Linley, Brooks's status was much more limited. As a composer, Brooks suffered from being most active when the music of other composers was more fashionable.⁶³ He was best-known for his work in the theaters, which included incidental music for plays as well as original music for popular operas.⁶⁴ Very little of his instrumental music was performed in the Bath concerts, and most of it is now lost. An exception to this is his *Concerto for the Violin in Nine Parts*, published at his own expense in 1792, which was occasionally performed by himself or his students.⁶⁵

Thomas Shaw

Violinist and composer Thomas Shaw was born in Bath in 1752.⁶⁶ His father was a double bass player and concert director in Bath for many years. Shaw performed in Bath for the first time in April 1769, and was active there until 1776 or 1777, despite being overshadowed by

⁶³ Kenneth Edward James, "Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Bath" (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway College, University of London, 1987), 122.

⁶⁴ Kenneth E. James. "Brooks, James." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/41485>.

⁶⁵ James, *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Bath*, 122.

⁶⁶ Roger Fiske and Kenneth E. James. "Shaw, Thomas." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/25607>.

fellow violinist Thomas Linley junior. In 1772, Shaw, along with colleague William Herschel, founded a breakaway group of musicians to challenge the stranglehold that the Linley family had on Bath's music scene. On January 23, 1773, an article in the *Bristol Journal* compared Thomas Shaw and Thomas Linley junior, opining that Shaw was "the most perfect Master of the Fingerboard", while Linley had "a graceful Manner of bowing", and "a Polish of Tone and Manner which renders him the most pleasing Musician".⁶⁷

Shaw moved to London around 1777 due to irreconcilable difficulties with the Linley family. While in London, he composed some instrumental music as well as music for the theater. He also became leader of the Drury Lane band in 1786 and remained in the post until the early 1800s. Little is known about his later life, except that he was driven out of London due to financial difficulties, and was found in Paris in the 1820s teaching music.

John Abraham Fisher

John Abraham Fisher was born in London in 1744, and made his name primarily in the theater. He served as the orchestra leader of Covent Garden between 1768 and 1778, during which time he also composed several operas for the company. He married his first wife Elizabeth Powell in 1772, and graduated in July 1777 from Oxford University with BMus and DMus degrees.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Wallfisch and Parley of Instruments, *English Classical Violin Concertos*, recorded Jan. 8th-10th (London: Hyperion, 1996), Compact disc.

⁶⁸ Paul F. Rice. "Fisher, John Abraham." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 30, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/09745>.

After leaving Covent Garden in 1778, Fisher concentrated on his solo career. When his wife died in 1780, he undertook an extended concert tour of the continent, with stops in France, Russia, Germany, and Russia. While in Vienna in 1783, he had the opportunity to accompany the young English soprano Nancy Storace in an aria. Fisher was very much taken by Nancy, despite the fact that she was twenty years younger, and the two married. However, this marriage did not last long, as Fisher was banished from Vienna in 1784 after reports that he had beat his wife reached the emperor. With his departure from Vienna, Fisher's fame ended. He spent much of his subsequent career in Dublin, where he enjoyed a relatively low-key career teaching and performing occasional concerts. He died in Ireland in 1806.

Fisher wrote three concertos for the violin, which were published by J. J. Hummel in Berlin in 1782. Unfortunately, these concertos were not available for this study. However, they are reported to be incredibly difficult, and contain many extreme register changes, double-stop passages, harmonics, and rapid passagework.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Chappell White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti: A History of the Early Classical Violin Concerto* (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1992), 310.

PART TWO

Analysis of the Concertos

Brief History of Pre-Classical Violin Concertos

The etymology of the term “concerto” is shrouded in mystery. Many believe that it is derived from the Latin verb *concertare*, which means to contend or fight. This interpretation of the term highlights the contrast element in a concerto, and considers the soloist(s) to be in contention against a larger body of musicians, namely the orchestra. However, this meaning of the term is disputed by many scholars, who believe that while the term is indeed derived from the verb *concertare*, it is derived from the Italian form of the verb rather than the Latin, which means instead “to coordinate or unite in a harmonious ensemble a heterogeneous group of players or singers, or both.”¹ A concerto then, according to this definition, is a musical composition where diverse groups of musicians are amicably collaborating with one another.²

An exact musical definition of the term remained ambiguous for over a hundred and fifty years after its first appearance in the early sixteenth century. The term concerto, when it first appeared, was used in conjunction with purely vocal music or mixed vocal and instrumental compositions. The first known use of the term was in a description of a Roman *intermedio* from 1519, “un concerto di voci in musica,” where it was clearly referring to a vocal ensemble.³ In the description of the first *intermedio* for the marriage of Francesco de’ Medici in 1565, the term was used to describe a mixed ensemble of instruments and voices: ‘La musica di questo primo

¹ Claude V. Palisca, *Baroque Music*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991), 66.

² A comprehensive discussion of this issue can be found in David Boyden’s article “When is a Concerto not a Concerto?”

³ David D. Boyden, “When is a Concerto not a Concerto?” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Apr., 1957), 221.

intermedio era concertato da ...' [there follows a list of instruments].⁴ At the end of the sixteenth century, the term was often used to describe large-scale church music that involved enormous groups of both voices and instruments, such as the *Sacre Symphoniae* by Venetian composer Giovanni Gabrieli.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the term “concerto” began to be associated solely with instrumental music. The first type of instrumental concerto to appear was the concerto grosso, in which a small group of instruments, the concertino, collaborates with a large group of instruments, the concerto grosso or ripieno. The typical instrumentation of the concertino, that of two violins, a cello and basso continuo, is identical to the instrumentation of a trio sonata, which suggests that the concerto grosso may have been intended as an expansion of the trio sonata. The ripieno, where the parts are freely doubled, is usually divided into first and second violins, violas, cellos, and basso continuo. Structurally, the concerto grosso follows the two formats found in Baroque sonatas: da chiesa and da camera. A typical *concerto da chiesa* contains four movements in the order slow-fast-slow-fast, while a suite of dance movements make up the concerto da camera. Roman composer Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) was one of the pioneers of the concerto grosso. He standardized the form of the genre in his *Twelve Concerto Grossi*, Op. 6, published in 1714 but undoubtedly written long before that.

In northern Italy, a different type of concerto was being cultivated by Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709) in the city of Bologna. Torelli was inspired by the practice, common in Venetian and Bolognese churches, of combining a solo trumpet with a small ensemble of strings, and adopted the idiom for the solo violin. The solo concerto, the second type of concerto to flourish

⁴ Arthur Hutchings, et al. "Concerto." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40737>.

in the late seventeenth century, was thus created. Most solo concertos contain three movements in the order fast-slow-fast.

Although the solo concerto was “invented” by Torelli, its immense popularity should be credited to Venetian composer and virtuoso violinist Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741). Vivaldi was one of the most prolific and influential composers in the late Baroque period, and wrote some two hundred and thirty solo violin concertos. In his *L'estro armonico*, op. 3, a set of twelve concertos written for one, two or four violins, Vivaldi established in the first movements (and sometimes last movements) the ritornello form, where tutti ritornellos for the full orchestra alternate with solo episodes.

Later Italian composers of Baroque concertos include Pietro Locatelli (1695-1764), whose concertos are notable for their extreme technical difficulties. Although trained in Rome, he abandoned the Roman tradition and wrote solo concertos in the modern Venetian style as established by Vivaldi. His most significant contribution to the genre was his *L'arte del violino* op. 3, a set of twelve concertos published in 1733. Each concerto has a long written-out “cadenza” called a “capriccio” inserted into the first and last movement. These caprices present the most difficult violin literature written before Paganini, and contain passages as high as sixteenth position.

The Italian concerto soon disseminated to the rest of Europe. It reached Germany mainly by way of Torelli's residence in Anspach and Vienna, as well as the efforts of Georg Muffat, champion and disciple of Corelli.⁵ In addition, many German musicians, including Dresden's concertmaster Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755), lived and studied in Italy, and brought the new style back with them when they returned home. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was heavily influenced by the new Italian-style concertos, and assimilated the new style by

⁵ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 9.

transcribing a number of Italian concertos for the keyboard. It is obvious from these transcriptions that Bach was particularly drawn to Vivaldi's concertos. Of the twenty-two concertos that Bach transcribed, almost half were by Vivaldi.⁶ Later, Bach wrote two solo violin concertos that were clearly modeled after Vivaldi's examples, albeit with more contrapuntal activity and an increased sense of dialogue between the soloist and the orchestra.⁷

While the new Italian concerto had a strong effect on German composers, its impact in France was significantly less marked. The French were more focused on their own musical traditions despite continuing Italian influences, and tended to be suspicious of abstract instrumental music.⁸ As a result, Italian style concertos, while still having a small niche of followers, did not enjoy the widespread popularity in France that they enjoyed in Germany. The most prolific French concerto composer was Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764), who studied in Italy with G. B. Somis and later Locatelli. Leclair was the most influential French violinist of his generation, and published twelve solo violin concertos in two separate sets, op. 7 and op. 10. These concertos combine Vivaldian characteristics (three-movement design, use of ritornello form) with French traits (tendency toward shorter phrases, less emphasis on propulsive forward movement).⁹

In England, Italian concertos were imported by the many foreign musicians who moved to London, or brought back by visitors to the continent. In contrast with the rest of Europe, the concerto grosso in the style of Corelli was generally preferred to Vivaldi's newer and more modern solo concerto, which was often considered overly virtuosic. This attitude was further

⁶ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 10.

⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹ Ibid., 18.

intensified when Corelli's pupil and keen advocate, Francesco Geminiani, moved to London in 1714 and quickly established himself as the most eminent violinist in the city. Geminiani wrote two sets of concerto grossos, op. 2 and 3 (1732), in the style of his master. One significant development of Geminiani's concertos was his inclusion of the viola in the concertino group in order to satisfy the English liking for "full" harmony. In 1739, Handel wrote his famous Twelve Grand Concertos Op. 6, which amalgamates Corellian, Vivaldian, as well as totally original formal elements.¹⁰

First-Movement Form: Sonata and Ritornello Form Hybridization

The first movements of the English concertos under discussion are without exception written in so-called "first-movement concerto form." This is a hybrid form, which combines characteristics from the Baroque ritornello form and the new Classical sonata form. Its use is widespread in the late eighteenth century and can be heard in most Classical era concertos.

The principle of ritornello originated from the da capo aria, where the vocal sections are interspersed with orchestral refrains. Vivaldi is widely acknowledged to be the first to apply this principle to a concerto movement. In his *L'estro armonico*, op. 3, he established the structural characteristics of ritornello form: a ritornello (refrain) for full orchestra is repeated in a number of closely-related keys, interspersed with modulating episodes, roughly equal in length to the ritornellos, in which the soloist dominates. Movements with four ritornellos and three episodes are the most common, although movements with five ritornellos can occasionally be found.

The opening ritornello remains in the tonic throughout, thereby establishing the movement's tonality. The second and third ritornellos are typically in the dominant and the

¹⁰ Hutchings, "Concerto."

relative minor respectively, although Vivaldi often deviates from this pattern. The final ritornello reestablishes the tonic. While ritornellos are tonally stable, episodes are modulatory; the key to which they modulate is confirmed by the following ritornello. Thematic materials are presented in the ritornellos. The solo episodes, by contrast, are virtuosic in nature and do not usually employ thematic materials.¹¹ Rather, they contain idiomatic passagework, such as scales, arpeggios and broken chords, which aim to show off the technical skills of the soloist.

Towards the middle of the century, composers began integrating sonata form principles into the ritornello structure. Although the alternation between four tutti and three solo sections is retained, the roles of the sections have been altered. The tuttis are now shorter than and subordinate to the solo sections.¹² The solo sections, in contrast to their quasi-transitional role in Vivaldi's concertos, now perform the important formal functions of the movement, and are analogous to the three sections of sonata form, namely the exposition, development, and recapitulation. Thematic materials play an increased role in the delineation of the formal structure, as multiple themes of contrasting character replace the monothematicism of Baroque ritornello movements. As we shall see, thematic materials are used to highlight shifts in tonality as well as to distinguish the soloist from the orchestra. In addition, there is an increased emphasis on the dichotomy between the tonic and the dominant (or in the case of minor-key first movements, of which there are none in the group of English concertos under scrutiny, between the tonic and the relative major).

¹¹ The sole exception to this is the occasional use of the ritornello's opening theme in the beginning of the first episode, a feature that is later employed in many Classical concertos.

¹² The opening tutti remains fairly lengthy since its role is to establish the tonic and introduce many of the movement's thematic materials.

Opening Tutti

The opening tutti of the new hybrid form has two principal functions: (a), to establish the key of the movement, and (b), to introduce some of its important thematic materials. Although opening tuttis always begin and end in the tonic, there is usually harmonic movement, typically to the dominant, which serves to relieve tonal monotony. The return of the tonic sometimes coincides with a restatement of the opening theme, creating a self-contained ternary form structure.

The opening tuttis by Linley, Shaw, and Brooks follow the standard I-V-I harmonic scheme. Samuel Wesley's opening tuttis, on the other hand, exhibit a chronological evolution in tonal design. While his early concertos follow the standard I-V-I harmonic scheme and include a substantial dominant key area, the dominant section diminishes in prominence after his third concerto, and disappears altogether in his late concertos. Harmonic interest in the non-modulatory opening tuttis of his late concertos is created by incidental excursions to a variety of keys, usually by way of chromatic sequences.

The opening tuttis of Brooks's and Shaw's concertos use a subordinate theme to delineate the dominant key area. While this would seem commonplace in the generation of composers that followed, it was an important innovation in this transitional period as Classical composers gradually moved away from the monothematicism of the Baroque era. In Brooks's concerto, there is a motivic connection between the opening theme (example 1), and the subordinate theme (example 2). However, a contrast in character between the two themes is created through changes in dynamics and accompanimental figuration, with the subordinate theme being somewhat more lyrical and gentle than the boisterous opening theme. In Shaw's concerto, the

contrast between the two themes is even more pronounced due to the reduction of orchestration to a single violin section for the subordinate theme.



Example 1 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 27-30



Example 2 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 1-4

The opening tutti of Wesley's concertos show little melodic variety. While there are always multiple themes, they are often similar in character. Furthermore, the themes have little structural significance, as they rarely coincide with the introduction of new key areas. His later concertos display slightly more melodic variety, but often solely in the form of a contrast in dynamics and the indication of *dolce* in the second theme group.

Despite the lack of melodic variety, Samuel Wesley can be compositionally daring at times. This is evident in the highly unusual opening tutti of his fourth concerto, which begins with a violin solo. A short four-bar melodic segment by the solo violin, accompanied lightly by the first and second violins, precedes the orchestra's entrance in m. 5. When Beethoven included a solo introduction in the opening tutti of his fifth piano concerto over twenty-five years later, he was wildly praised by critics and audiences alike for his breathtaking originality. Few people then or now know of this English precursor.

First Solo Section

The first solo sections of all the English concertos under consideration modulate from the tonic to the dominant. The shift to the dominant typically occurs quite early, resulting in a substantial amount of time in the new key area before the next tutti entrance.

Although the first solo section usually expounds on some of the thematic materials already introduced in the opening tutti, it is common for the soloist to introduce new materials as well, especially in the second theme group. This serves as a way of distinguishing the music of the solos from the tuttis, and of distinguishing the two groups and their roles. In Baroque ritornello form, the tutti sections primarily present thematic materials while the solo sections contain mostly idiomatic figurations, resulting in a natural distinction in style and texture between the two forces. In the new Classical concerto, however, both parties present thematic materials, thus eliminating their inherent contrast in style. Contrast in the thematic materials presented by the two forces therefore became necessary.

The first theme from the opening tutti is often repeated at the beginning of the first solo section, although it is sometimes varied for violinistic reasons. In Wesley's third concerto, for example, the theme is transposed up an octave to suit the idiomatic brilliance of the solo violin. In Shaw's concerto, the construction of the theme has been significantly altered, but an impression of likeness is created due to the use of a common head motive (examples 3 and 3a).



Example 3 – Shaw Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 1-5, first theme of opening tutti



Example 3a – Shaw Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 48-51, first theme of first solo section

The restatement of the opening theme in the beginning of the first solo can have a negative effect, as an overuse of the theme may result. This is the case in Wesley's third concerto, where the opening theme was already repeated at the end of the first tutti to emphasize the return of the tonic. By using the theme again at the soloist's entrance and then yet again in the transition to the second theme group, Wesley uses the same theme *four times* in the first seventy-eight measures of the movement.

In some concertos, the soloist enters with an entirely new theme. Such a design has the advantage of immediately distinguishing the music of the soloist from the music of the tutti orchestra. In Linley's concerto as well as many of Wesley's concertos, the use of a new theme is necessitated by the subdued nature of the opening theme, which would have made a strong and decisive entrance for the soloist impossible.

The second theme group coincides with the introduction of the dominant, and serves to delineate the new key area. Traditionally, the second theme group is more lyrical than the first theme group. However, such a contrast is rarely found in the English concertos, where the two theme groups often show a remarkable similarity in character.

Wesley's second concerto is unique in that the dominant key area is not highlighted with a new theme group. Rather, the new key area is introduced with passagework. A scalar passage of sixteenth notes, shown in example 4, rather tediously repeats three times.



Example 4 – Wesley Concerto No. 2, 1st mvt, mm. 77-82

Virtuosic passagework is used in all of the English concertos to connect the two theme groups, as well as to expand the dominant key area and propel the music into the next tutti section. While these passages are challenging technically, they are often somewhat bland compositionally. This is particularly true in Linley's and Brooks's concertos, where the passagework is mostly composed of generic scales and arpeggios. In Brook's concerto, however, the monotony is occasionally alleviated with short melodic segments.

While generic passagework also abounds in Wesley's concertos, monotony is relieved by his frequent use of sequences and chromaticism, which create substantial harmonic interest. In addition, Wesley sometimes creates an impression of polyphony with a single line in his passagework, a feature that is frequently found in Bach's works for solo violin. This type of "compound melody" is shown in the following example, taken from his sixth concerto.



Example 6 – Wesley Concerto No. 6, 1st mvt, mm. 106-108

Typically, the end of the first solo builds in excitement and loudness before concluding with a trill on the second scale degree of the dominant key, setting the mood for a dramatic tutti entrance.¹³ In the hands of the right composer, this has an electrifying effect. Samuel Wesley, however, had different ideas when he wrote his third violin concerto, and chose to end the first solo in an open ended fashion, with a gradual fading out suggested by the rhythm. After the grand pause that follows, Wesley begins the following tutti with a unison passage for the entire orchestra including the horns, marked *fortissimo*, that sounds rather out of place (example 7a). This quirky and slightly awkward-sounding passage exemplifies Wesley's tendency towards experimentation.

¹³ While this trill is not specifically notated in Linley's concerto, the practice is so widespread that the whole note D in measure 96 would almost sound strange if a trill were not inserted.

Violin

1st & 2nd vlms
+ Cellos

f

tr

tr

tr

tr

p

Example 7 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 132-140

ff

Example 7a – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 141-145

Second Tutti

The main role of this section is to connect the first solo section, the exposition of the movement, to the second solo section, the development of the movement. In many concertos, the second tutti is brief and recalls only small segments of the opening tutti, thus no longer acting as a refrain as it did in Baroque ritornello movements. The second tutti in Linley's concerto is one such example; it is merely four measures long, and restates only the closing theme from the opening tutti, now in the dominant. The second tutti in all five of Mozart's violin concertos also follow this practice.

Alternatively, the second tutti may begin with the opening theme and restate most if not all of the opening tutti's thematic materials. This practice was somewhat old-fashioned by the late eighteenth century, as it lends the second tutti a ritornello function. Many of Wesley's second tuttis follow this procedure; they are almost exact replicas of the opening tuttis, only omitting non-essential elements such as connecting sequences. Partly as a result of this, most of Wesley's second tuttis are significant in length. This is especially true in his fifth concerto, where the second tutti, at sixty-nine measures, constitutes the longest section in the movement, occupying almost twenty percent of the movement's length. In his later concertos, Wesley breaks from the habit of beginning the second tutti with the opening theme. However, his second tuttis all remain substantial in length and recall thematic materials from the opening tutti at some point in the section.

Most second tuttis remain in the dominant throughout. In a small minority of concertos, however, the second tutti is modulatory, and moves from the dominant to a remote key. This is the case in the G major and A major violin concertos of Mozart, where the tutti modulates to the remote keys of D minor and C-sharp minor respectively. Wesley's first concerto also uses this model, albeit in a less chromatic way, as it modulates from the dominant to the relative minor, the key in which the next solo begins.

Second Solo Section

Although this section of the concerto is often compared to the development in symphonic sonata form, it differs in one important aspect. Whereas the development in a symphonic movement develops motives presented in the exposition, this is rarely the case in concertos, as

idiomatic passagework is used to show off the skills of the soloist. Presumably, the English composers under discussion were more eager to display violinistic flair than compositional skills.

With this in mind, whether the term “development” is appropriate for this section of the concerto is open to debate. Despite comparing this section of the concerto to the development of the symphony in his 1793 treatise *Introductory Essay on Composition*, Koch’s own interpretation of the term “development” makes it somewhat unsuitable for use in the concerto. The German equivalent of the term, *Durchführung*, was used in the late eighteenth century to describe successive imitations of a fugue subject in different voices.¹⁴ In other non-fugal circumstances, Koch defines the term as follows:

In compositions that are not in the strict form of the fugue, the term implies the continuation and constant working over of the main idea in various changes and modifications.¹⁵

Very few of the English concertos contain the “continuation and constant working over of the main idea” described by Koch above. Indeed, only Brooks’s concerto, and then only cursorily, contains a development that fits this description. Brooks includes in his development variations on previously introduced ideas, as shown in example 9. In addition, the beginning of the development shows a vague resemblance to the second theme from the opening tutti, as shown in example 10.

¹⁴ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 91.

¹⁵ Ibid.

mm. 175-180



mm. 1-8

Example 9 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 175-180, mm. 1-8

mm. 153-156



mm. 27-30

Example 10 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 153-156, mm. 27-30

Wesley's later concertos also sometimes borrow segments of previously introduced material for the development, as seen in the following example, taken from his seventh concerto.



Example 11 – Wesley Concerto No. 7, 1st mvt, mm. 203-206, mm. 1-4

Some modern theorists, however, do not require the presence of thematic variations for a section classify as developmental. The definition of “development” given by Leonard Ratner would seem to encompass the second solo sections of the English concertos under discussion:

(1)The treatment of musical materials to convey a sense of expansion (increased scope of structure) or exploration (significant shifts in harmonic direction); (2) the section in sonata form that is devoted to such treatment, i.e., the development section.¹⁶

An alternative interpretation of the second solo section in these concertos is that it is equivalent to the B section of a da capo aria, the ancestor of the Baroque ritornello form. In a da capo aria, the interior B section contrasts with the two outer A sections in terms of tonality, texture, and character. The second solo section in these concertos contains a similar contrast with the first and third solo sections.

Frequent modulation is a standard feature of second solo sections. The modulation schemes in Linley’s and Brooks’s concertos are straightforward, presumably since excessive

¹⁶ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 91.

modulations would most likely draw the listeners' attention to the compositional aspects of the concerto rather than the violinistic. The developments in both of these concertos begin in the dominant, and venture only as far as the relative minor. The developments in Samuel Wesley's concertos, on the other hand, show significant modulatory activity. They visit on average five different keys, of which the relative minor is often the most emphasized.¹⁷

Third Tutti and Third Solo Sections

The vast majority of the English concertos feature a "double return" recapitulation, that is, the coincidence of the tonic return with a restatement of the opening theme.¹⁸ The exact location of this recapitulation, however, is subject to variation. In some concertos, the recapitulation occurs at the beginning of the third solo section. In this configuration, the second solo section ends in a remote key and the third tutti moves towards the tonic, concluding on the dominant seventh of the tonic. The soloist then begins the third solo section with a restatement of the opening theme in the tonic.

Alternatively, the recapitulation takes place at the beginning of the third tutti, the preferred option for the English composers in this study. In this configuration, the end of the second solo functions as a retransition, moving from a remote key to the dominant seventh of the tonic. The third tutti then begins with a restatement of the movement's opening theme in the tonic, played by the orchestra. However, the orchestra is usually interrupted by the soloist after

¹⁷ The second solo in Wesley's second concerto is an exception and contains a simple tonal design, beginning in the dominant and modulating only as far as the relative minor. The reason for this is that Wesley states the same four-measure theme *four times* in the beginning of the section, all in the same key. Not surprisingly, there was little time left for distant modulations.

¹⁸ The only exceptional case is Shaw's concerto, where the opening theme does not recur until the closing tutti.

the first theme has been restated, typically with passagework leading to a tonic restatement of the second theme group.

Of the two recapitulatory methods discussed thus far, the third tutti recapitulation appears to be the more modern, as J. C. Bach and Mozart, both important figures in the development of concerto form, show evolution towards that design in their concertos. J. C. Bach's early keyboard concertos, written in Berlin, overwhelmingly favor the third solo recapitulation. In his later London concertos, however, he abandons this procedure in favor of recapitulatory tuttis.¹⁹ Mozart's earliest experiments with the concerto were the arrangements he made in 1767 of sonata movements by other composers. These arrangements show a wide variety of recapitulatory procedures, including the third solo recapitulation. By the time of his K. 175 concerto in 1773, the recapitulatory tutti had been clearly established in his conception of the keyboard concerto.²⁰

The most obvious advantage of the third tutti recapitulation is that the full force of the orchestra can be used to emphasize the return of the tonic. A particularly effective example of this is the first movement of Beethoven's violin concerto, where the development section concludes with a mysterious modulatory passage for solo violin, marked *pianissimo*. At the end of this passage, a short and explosive *crescendo* leads into a *fortissimo* tutti recapitulation, where the concerto's signature five-note timpani motive is played triumphantly by the entire orchestra.²¹

¹⁹ Shelly Davis, "H. C. Koch, the Classic Concerto, and the Sonata-Form Retransition," *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter, 1983): 51.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ However, this cannot always be the motivation behind the use of this procedure, as third tutti recapitulations are occasionally used even when the opening theme is subdued in character. Wesley's fifth concerto is one such example.

Wesley's first and fourth concertos follow a slightly unusual procedure in the recapitulation. In these concertos, the second solo ends in a remote key and the beginning of the third tutti moves towards the tonic, raising expectations of a third solo recapitulation.

Immediately preceding the third solo section, however, the orchestra restates the opening theme in the tonic. The third tutti, therefore, has both a modulatory and a recapitulatory function. This method of recapitulation is rare in Classical concertos, but was used extensively by Giornovich.

Recapitulations are typically tonally stable, remaining in the tonic throughout.

Transposition of subordinate key materials from the exposition to the tonic in the recapitulation is an important sonata principle, since it resolves the long-term tension between the tonic and the dominant. Somewhat surprisingly, this procedure is lacking in many of Samuel Wesley's concertos, where the recapitulations often omit the second theme group entirely as well as much of the transitional passagework. In his first concerto, even the first theme fails to make a full reappearance as it is interrupted by new passagework after only two measures. Wesley's reluctance to restate subordinate key materials in the tonic is perhaps an indication of the composer's Baroque tendencies, since episodes in the Baroque ritornello form almost never recall materials already stated in an earlier episode. An alternative explanation is that Wesley wanted to allow time for an elaborate cadenza without disproportionately lengthening the recapitulation. In his fifth concerto, which contains the second longest recapitulation out of his seven concertos, the cadenza is omitted.

In contrast with the truncated recapitulations in Wesley's concertos, the recapitulation in Linley's concerto is unusually long, as both the opening tutti and the first solo section are repeated in their entirety. In fact, the recapitulation here is so long that Linley felt it necessary to

modulate to the relative minor soon after the beginning of the recapitulation, undoubtedly to relieve the monotony of remaining in the tonic for such an extensive period of time.

Closing Tutti

In accordance with conventional practice in Classical concertos, closing tutti in the English concertos are short, and recall closing materials from the exposition. Harmonically, little of interest occurs in this section, as its main role is to prolong the tonic after the final cadence. In the majority of cases, this final cadence is elaborated upon with an improvised cadenza, indicated with a fermata and coinciding with a six-four chord on the fifth scale degree.

Second-Movement Form: Structural Amalgamation

The second movements in all of the English concertos are written in a slow tempo. This allows the soloist to showcase a beauty of tone and expressive quality, attributes that are rarely displayed in the virtuosic outer movements. While there are Classical keyboard concertos and symphonies concertantes that consist of just two fast movements,²² the vast majority of Classical violin concertos contain a slow movement, possibly because the violin's cantabile style and close depiction of the human voice make it particularly suited to slow movements.

Aside from showcasing a beauty of tone, the second movement also allows the performer to demonstrate proficiency in ornamentation. In contrast with modern practice, ornaments were rarely notated in the eighteenth century, as composers were generally happy to leave the location

²² White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 78.

and type of ornaments as well as their manner of execution up to the performer. The improvisation of ornaments was therefore an essential and highly-revered skill.²³

The most common types of ornaments in the eighteenth century were appoggiaturas, trills, turns, mordents, grace notes, arpeggios, and cadenzas. Of these, cadenzas were the most difficult to improvise due to their elaborate length. Rigid rules regarding the use of these ornaments did not exist, for there were vast variances in approach between different composers and performers. In addition, the character of the music has a big influence on the kind of ornaments to be employed. Generally speaking, slow passages and cantabile melodies require more lyrical ornaments such as passing tones and arpeggios, whereas fast passages require quicker and livelier ones such as mordents.

Although ornaments are usually expected to be improvised by the performer, there are occasions when they are written out by the composer. In the ternary-form second movement of James Brooks's concerto, written-out ornaments abound in both the B section as well as the return of the A section. Written-out ornaments can also be seen in the first movement of his concerto, as evidenced by the written-out appoggiaturas in examples 1 and 2 on page 36.

The English slow movements typically employ keys other than the tonic. The most popular key is the dominant, which is used in four out of the ten concertos. The relative minor and the parallel minor are each used in two concertos, while the subdominant is used in one concerto. James Brooks's second movement is unique in that it remains in the tonic. Modulatory schemes in this movement are generally more basic than those in the outer movements, with the

²³ An exhaustive discussion on the highly detailed and often controversial topic of ornamentation is impossible here due to limited space. There are many treatises that discuss this topic in great depth, of which the most important are C. P. E. Bach's *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, Johann Joachim Quantz's *On Playing the Flute*, and Leopold Mozart's *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*. Unfortunately, these treatises often contain conflicting opinions. In ambiguous situations, the performer would be well-advised to exercise his/her best judgment as well as musical imagination after examining the available documentation.

majority modulating to just one subordinate key.²⁴ Minor-key movements typically modulate to the relative major, while major-key movements typically modulate to the dominant. These basic modulatory schemes can be explained by the slow tempo of the movement; elaborate tonal structures such as those found in the first movements would cause the movement to be excessively long.

Despite their tonal simplicity, the English slow movements display more formal variety than the outer movements. Whereas the first and third movements employ variations of the same basic form (“first-movement concerto form” and rondo form respectively), a wide array of forms is found in the second movements, including binary, ternary, rondo, ritornello, and theme and variations. Diversity can also be found in the role of the orchestra. The second movements by Brooks, Linley, and Shaw are written entirely for the solo violin without any tutti sections, a trait characteristic of Italian concertos such as those by Vivaldi.²⁵ In contrast, the second movements of Wesley’s concertos contain alternations between solo and tutti, a trait characteristic of German concertos such as those by J. S. Bach.²⁶

The second movements by Brooks, Shaw and Linley employ ternary form. The specifications of these movements are described in the table below.

²⁴ The slow movement of Wesley’s first concerto is a notable exception, and will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

²⁵ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 79.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

	Brooks	Shaw	Linley
Movement Heading	Largo Affetuoso	Arioso	Adagio
Tonality in Relation to First Movement	Tonic	Dominant	Parallel minor
Modulates to	Dominant	Dominant	Dominant minor
Length of Movement	30 measures	46 measures	29 measures
Length of Individual Sections (A, B, A)	8, 8, 14	8, 8, 8	8, 13, 8
Configuration of A Section's Return	Expanded using materials from B section, now transposed to the tonic	Identical to initial presentation	Identical to initial presentation
Other Notable Features	Cadenza indicated	Appended by a 6-measure coda; B section and return of A section are framed by repeat signs, indicating a rounded binary structure	Return of A section is not written out; rather, it is indicated with the instruction <i>da capo</i>

One of the advantages of ternary form is that the soloist is provided with ample opportunities to ornament in the repeat of the A section. While ornaments form an essential part of slow movements in general, they are particularly expected on repeats. C. P. E. Bach, in the preface to his Six Sonatas H. 126, 136–40 (sometimes called *Sonatas with Varied Repeats*), remarked that “variation in repeats is indispensable today.”²⁷

The second movements by Samuel Wesley display a wide variety of forms, another sign of the composer's penchant for experimentation. The second movement of his first concerto is a set of theme and variations on Thomas Linley senior's aria “When Wars Alarmed.” It is unlike a

²⁷ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Sechs Sonaten mit veränderten Reprisen*, Leipzig: J. G. I. Breitkopf, 1785.

typical theme and variations movement, however, in that the theme is repeated in between the two variations, and also at the end of the movement. A ritornello-like structure, with the theme serving as the “ritornello,” is thus created. This movement is particularly complex tonally since each section contains a dichotomy between the tonic and a unique subordinate key: the theme modulates to the relative minor, the first variation modulates to the dominant, and the second variation begins in the tonic minor and modulates to its relative major. This movement also presents more violinistic challenges than the typical slow movement; both of the variations are very difficult, and employ advanced techniques such as up-bow staccato, doubles stops, and bariolages.

Wesley employs binary form in the slow movements of his fourth and fifth concertos. Binary form had largely fallen out of fashion by the late eighteenth century, and Wesley’s use of this outdated structure is a sign of his affinity with the Baroque style.²⁸ Both of these movements contain three brief and tonally-stable tuttis in alternation with two long and modulatory solos. Thematic materials do not play a structural role in these movements, as they are used neither to delineate the arrival of the subordinate key at the end of the first solo, nor to emphasize the return of the tonic at the end of the second solo.

Ritornello form is used in the slow movements of Wesley’s third and seventh concertos. In comparison with the ritornello structures found in first movements, however, the ones found here are much abbreviated. Whereas the typical first movement contains four ritornellos, the slow movement in the third concerto contains three ritornellos, while the one in the seventh

²⁸ Also characteristic of the Baroque style is the end of the slow movement in Wesley’s second concerto, which ends in the dominant before resolving to the tonic at the beginning of the following movement.

concerto contains just two.²⁹ Both of these ritornello movements feature a binary tonal scheme, with the first solo modulating to a subordinate key, and the second solo modulating back to the tonic. The feature that distinguishes them from the binary form movements is that identical thematic materials are used in all of the tuttis, a feature characteristic of ritornello structures.

Wesley uses a five-part rondo form for the slow movement of his sixth concerto. The movement is titled “Romance,” an increasingly popular title for slow movements in the late eighteenth century. Romance movements were particularly prevalent in Giornovich’s concertos, and interestingly, Wesley’s sixth concerto was written immediately after he re-orchestrated one of Giornovich’s concertos in 1782. Wesley’s designation of this movement as a romance could also be seen as an attempt at modernization. Koch, in his *Introductory Essay on Composition*, said that romances are used in more modern concertos instead of the customary Adagio.³⁰

The precise definition of a romance movement is vague. The term was described by Thomas Busby in 1828 as “formerly a lyric tale sung by the wandering troubadours. But now we apply the term to instrumental compositions of a somewhat desultory and romantic cast.”³¹ Other scholars, however, are more inclusive in their definition of the term, and assign the term to almost any song-like movement.³² Koch’s *Lexikon* defines the term as follows:

Romanze (Romance) in the original meaning is a song in a lyrical verse form that comprises a narrative of tragedy or love and that is clothed in an extremely naïve and

²⁹ The initial presentation of the ritornello in the tonic is missing in the seventh concerto. The first tutti of this movement is just one measure long, and does not contain any important thematic materials.

³⁰ Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody-Sections 3 and 4*, trans. Nancy Kovaleff Baker, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 212.

³¹ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 82.

³² Ibid.

simple style... And so one is accustomed to designating as romances those instrumental pieces having a slow tempo and the aforementioned character, which are written in an unelaborated and naïve manner and are in the form of a rondo, or very little different from the rondo.³³

Aside from the use of rondo form, the one characteristic that seems to exist in all instrumental romances is an initial, closed section made up of regular, well-defined phrases – a section that corresponds to the vocal romance.³⁴ The opening phrase of this movement, indicated in example 12, fits this description perfectly. While there is nothing inherently remarkable about this phrase, its balance and symmetry contradicts Wesley's occasional tendency to write irregularly-structured phrases.



Example 12 – Wesley Concerto No. 6, 2nd movement, mm. 1-8

Despite their considerable formal variety, the slow movements in the English concertos are somewhat lacking in dramatic interest. Interest in the outer movements of the English concertos is generated largely by the brilliance of technical passagework, a feature that is absent in the slow movement. It seems that without it, the English composers are unable to find alternative ways of sustaining interest in the slow movements of their concertos. Interest in these

³³ Milligan, *The Concerto and London*, 157.

³⁴ Ibid.

movements, then, is entirely dependent on the performer's improvised embellishments and expressive qualities.

Third-Movement Form: From Ritornello to Rondo

Two formal designs exist in Classical concerto finales: ritornello and rondo. These forms share a basic alternating form, but the principle difference between the two is that in ritornello form the refrain is repeated in a variety of closely-related keys, whereas in rondo form it is always in the tonic.³⁵ Concertos written prior to 1770 almost invariably contain ritornello finales, resulting in a structural similarity between the first and last movement. Differences between the two movements are often found in secondary characteristics such as tempo, meter, and texture, rather than in large-scale structure. Around 1770, rondo form quite suddenly became the predominant design. Rondo form, of course, was not a new invention; it was used regularly by Baroque composers, particular the French, in other genres.³⁶

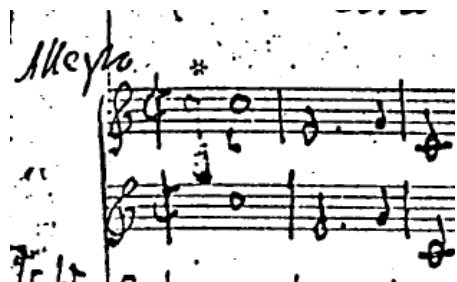
The evolution from ritornello to rondo form affected composers all across Europe, and is clearly demonstrated by the finales of Mozart's five violin concertos. His first concerto, written in 1773, contains a ritornello finale, while his remaining four concertos, written at the end of 1775, contain rondo finales. Furthermore, Mozart wrote in 1777 a new rondo movement, K.269, to replace the by-then old-fashioned finale of his first concerto.

³⁵ Statements of the refrain in a closely-related key can occasionally be found in late-Classical rondos, such as the finale of Beethoven's violin concerto. This feature, when present, is usually employed as a surprise element, and therefore tends to be restricted to just one restatement.

³⁶ In fact, there is one exceptional concerto from the Baroque period – J. S. Bach's E major violin concerto – where the composer almost prophetically used the rondo form in the last movement. However, it is unlikely that the English composers under discussion were influenced by this work, since Bach's compositional output was largely unknown from the time of his death until their rediscovery in the early nineteenth century.

Although the vogue for rondo form is clearly evidenced in concerto finales, its surge in popularity was not restricted to the concerto genre. Mozart, for one, wrote twenty-one rondos in all genres from 1764 to 1772, and then suddenly fifteen in 1773 alone, while Haydn's rondo output exhibits a similar burst of activity around 1773.³⁷ Much anecdotal evidence exists to corroborate with these statistics. Mozart remarked to his father in a letter in 1782 that audiences would often force him to repeat the rondo movements of his piano concertos, while C. P. E. Bach indicated that he often included rondos in his keyboard works in order to increase sales.³⁸

The popular practice of titling Classical concerto finales "Rondo" (or "Rondeau") may also have been indicative of the form's popularity. The titling of a movement according to its formal design rather than its tempo or character is rare, and may have been done in the case of rondo movements in order to advertise their structure. The manuscript of Wesley's first concerto provides evidence that this may have been the case. The titles for the first two movements, as shown in examples 13 and 14, are written discreetly above the clef of the first staff. The "Rondeaux" title of the third movement, on the other hand, is written in the middle of the page in big letters and emphasized with a box, as shown in example 15.



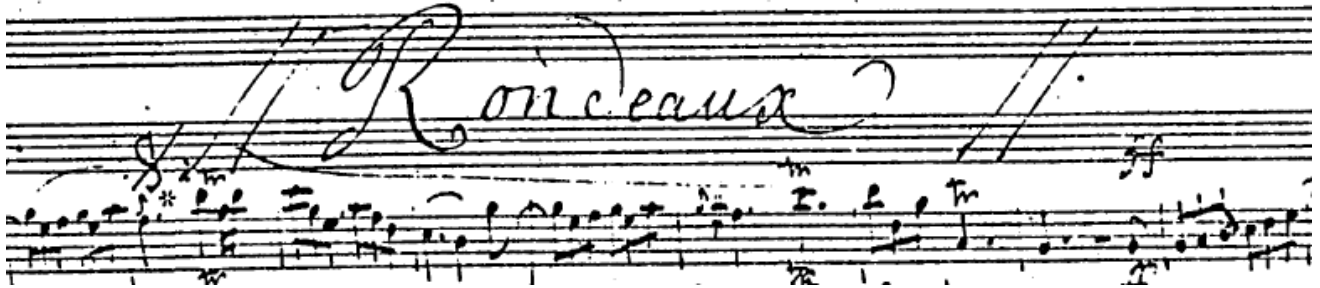
Example 13 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 1st mvt, movement heading

³⁷ Malcolm S. Cole, "The Vogue of the Instrumental Rondo in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Autumn, 1969): 440.

³⁸ Malcolm S. Cole. "Rondo." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/23787>.



Example 14 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 2nd mvt, movement heading



Example 15 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 3rd mvt, movement heading

It is difficult to attribute this vogue for rondos to any one particular cause, as no person, nation, or work seems to have been solely responsible. It appears, however, that the popularity of the Italian opera buffa, which is interspersed with many rondos, may have played a significant role.³⁹

Although the rondo finale is often said to have spread from Paris, there is evidence to suggest that it may actually have originated from London. In 1770, the *Journal de musique* credited violinist and composer François Hippolyte Barthélemon (1741-1808) with introducing

³⁹ Cole. "Rondo."

the rondo finale to Paris.⁴⁰ Although originally from France, Barthélemon immigrated to London in 1764 and published eight concertos in the city between 1770 and 1775, of which three contain rondo finales. Barthélemon subsequently performed these concertos at the *Concert Spirituel* in Paris, and it seems likely that these performances caused the new fashion to take hold in his homeland, and subsequently to spread across Europe. The concertos of London-based violinist Felice Giardini may also have had an influence. Giardini wrote six concertos for the violin, published in 1770, of which four contain rondo finales. While it is uncertain whether Giardini or Barthélemon was first to write rondo finales, it is clear that these two London-based composers were pioneers in the practice, since the form is not found in the concertos of their contemporaries or immediate predecessors.⁴¹

All of the English concertos contain rondo finales, as one would expect given their dates of composition. Structurally, three different configurations can be found: the five-part rondo, the seven-part rondo, and the nine-part rondo. The seven-part configuration is by far the most common, and is used by seven of the ten concertos. Duple meter, whether of the simple (2/4) or compound (6/8) variety, dominates in this movement, possibly due to dance influence.

In contrast with continental norms, the refrain in most of the English concertos is played by the orchestra. This characteristic can be found in the earliest concerto rondos, such as those by Barthélemon and Giardini, but most composers soon decided that the refrain should be given to the soloist since it carried the defining theme of the movement. Of the ten English concertos, eight contain orchestral refrains. In Brooks's concerto and Wesley's third concerto, the two exceptions, the refrain is split evenly between the soloist and the orchestra.

⁴⁰ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 84.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

Restatements of the refrain are typically identical to its initial presentation. In many cases, the refrain is only written out once at the beginning of the movement, with *da capo* or *dal segno* written at the end of the episodes to indicate its repetition. Minor variations, however, can sometimes be found. The final refrain in most of Wesley's concertos is abbreviated, and in cases where the refrain is particularly long, earlier restatements are also truncated. In Shaw's concerto, the final refrain is split between the soloist and the orchestra, in contrast with the earlier refrains, which are played entirely by the orchestra. Finally, the final refrain in Brooks's concerto is written out with ornamentation. This, of course, was made possible by Brooks's assignment of the refrains to the soloist, another reason solo refrains may have become popular.

The episodes are on average twice as long as the refrain, and are almost always assigned to the soloist. Thematic materials typically begin the episode, after which virtuosic passagework is used to transition to the next refrain. Thematic materials used in the episodes are not typically derived from the refrain, although they show distinct similarities in some cases (see example 16 below). Interrelations between episodes are non-existent, as materials presented by one episode are never repeated in a later episode. There are several episodes in Wesley's concertos that do not contain any melodic materials, consisting entirely of virtuosic passagework.

Example 16



Shaw Concerto, 3rd mvt, mm. 1-8 (refrain)



Shaw Concerto, 3rd mvt, mm. 25-32 (first episode)

Subordinate keys are explored in the episodes. Koch indicates in his treatise, however, that the finale should be less complex tonally than the first movement, and the English composers all adhere to this recommendation.⁴² Generally, only closely-related keys are used, with the most common being the dominant and the relative minor. Furthermore, each episode typically modulates to only one subordinate key. Multiple modulations within an episode, such as those found in the development sections of first movements, are rare.

Every episode ends in the dominant in preparation for the return of the refrain. Many employ a dominant pedal, and in Brooks's, Shaw's and Linley's concertos, Eingangs are indicated. Eingangs are frequently used by Classical composers in their rondo movements as a transitional device, and are particularly associated with the concertos of Mozart. The two Eingangs in Brooks's concerto, however, differ from the typical Eingang in one important aspect. While Eingangs are usually indicated by a fermata and improvised by the performer, Brooks writes out both of the Eingangs in his concerto. Since they do not feature "hints" of the refrain or other anticipatory or tension-building characteristic we associate with Mozart, it is possible that Brooks decided to write them out due to a lack of improvisatory skills.

The first episode in Wesley's first concerto is particularly interesting in that it shows similarities to a first movement exposition. The episode contains two theme groups, one in the tonic and one in the dominant, connected with idiomatic passagework. Furthermore, the second theme group is doubled in thirds, which, as shall be seen later, seems to be feature characteristic of English second themes. The presence of two contrasting theme groups within one episode is

⁴² Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition*, 213.

rare, and their use here could be seen as an early instance of sonata-rondo conflation, a characteristic usually associated with mature Classical works.⁴³

The episodes in James Brooks's concerto recall thematic materials from the first movement, as illustrated by examples 17 and 18 below. This cyclic design creates thematic unity between the movements, a feature that is rarely found in pre-nineteenth century compositions. Brooks's use of this feature is surprising given the otherwise simple nature of his concerto. When Beethoven united the four movements of his fifth symphony with a common motive, the music world was astounded. Few people know that such a technique had already been used in the violin concerto by James Brooks.

Example 17



Brooks Concerto, 3rd mvt, mm. 37-40



Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 153-156

⁴³ The tonal scheme in the finale of Wesley's seventh concerto also hints at the sonata-rondo design. The first episode modulates from the tonic to the dominant, the second episode has a free modulatory scheme, while the third episode is in the tonic, creating a tonal scheme that is highly reminiscent of sonata-form movements.

Melodic contrast and repetition are the primary means of articulating phrase structure, and phrase endings are clearly-articulated through a combination of rhythm, melodic contour and harmony.

In Classical phrases, the *Fortspinnung* technique is mostly used in transitional passagework, which results in an increased differentiation between melody and passagework.

The English concertos primarily employ balanced and periodic Classical-style phrases. A quintessential example is the first theme from Brooks's first movement, as seen in example 19.



Example 19 – Brooks Concerto, 1st movement, mm. 65-76

The twelve-measure sentence is clearly divided into three four-measure phrases. The presentation phrase occupies the first four measures, and is followed, as expected, by a four-measure continuation phrase. The continuation phrase, however, ends with an inconclusive cadence (an IAC in m. 8), which necessitates a repetition of the continuation to provide a strong perfect authentic cadence.

The concertos by Brooks and Shaw adhere most strictly to the Classical phrase structure just described. Wesley's and Linley's concertos, on the other hand, display occasional Baroque influences. Although the second theme of Linley's first movement contains 2+2 repetition like a

Classical sentence, the phrase begins on the third quarter note of the bar, which calls to mind the Baroque Gavotte.



Example 20 – Linley Concerto, 1st movement, mm. 77-81, second theme

Baroque influences are perhaps most noticeable in Samuel Wesley's concertos, as he frequently writes asymmetrical phrases with ambiguous endings, particularly in his early concertos. Example 21, taken from the first movement of his first concerto, illustrates this tendency. After the Gavotte-like theme that ends in m. 157, the transitional passage which follows is abruptly interrupted after three and a half measures, and moves without clear punctuation into a new thematic idea in m. 161.



Example 21 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 1st movement, mm. 154-169

In addition to the Baroque and Classical conflation described above, Wesley's phrase structures also contain many personal idiosyncrasies. The first theme of his fourth concerto, shown below, is particularly interesting.



Example 22 – Wesley Concerto No. 4, 1st movement, mm. 8-22

Although this theme is probably best described as a sentence, the proportions of its constituent parts are unique, with the number three, rather than two, dominating on many levels. The basic idea, which first appears in mm. 8-9, is presented three times rather than the customary two. In the continuation phrase, the fragmentation is likewise stated three times instead of two. At the end of the sentence in m. 17, Wesley proceeds into the next phrase without a clear cadence, which calls to mind the overlapping of phrases typical of the Baroque style. In the transition that follows, the number three again dominates; it is six measures long, and is clearly divisible into two three-measure segments.

Regularity and clarity of phrasing is most conspicuous in slow movements of the Romance type, as periodicity and balance of structure seems to be essential to the simple and somewhat “innocent” character of these movements. Even Samuel Wesley, whose phrase structure is otherwise irregular and ambiguous, writes clearly-defined and balanced phrases in his Romance type movements (see example 23). One can fairly conclude, therefore, that when Wesley wrote asymmetrical phrases, it was a deliberate attempt to create musical interest, rather a sign of his ignorance of the new style.



Example 23 – Wesley Concerto No. 6, 2nd movement, mm. 1-16

Harmony

The trend during the galant period was towards simple harmony. In Baroque compositions, the most important part of a composition was the bass; the other parts were realizations of harmonies implied by it. The galant style, however, is characterized by simple and clear melodies, which composers felt made music more comprehensible and attractive, especially to inexperienced listeners. With this newfound emphasis on melody, harmony became a secondary concern to most composers, and usually functioned to support the melody in a plain and unobtrusive manner.

All of the English concertos display the quintessential traits of galant-style harmony: heavy reliance on primary triads, slow harmonic rhythm, and controlled use of dissonances. Upon closer inspection, however, individual differences between the composers start to become apparent, and influences of Baroque music begin to surface in some concertos.

James Brooks's concerto uses very simple harmonies, and employs primary triads almost exclusively. Sporadic dissonances can be found in the form of appoggiaturas and suspensions, while chromaticism is restricted to the occasional applied chord and chromatic passing tone.

The outer movements of Thomas Linley's concerto shares Brooks's harmonic simplicity, especially the reliance on primary triads. However, Linley's concerto is notable for its constant use of chain suspensions, which gives the work a hint of Baroque flavor. An example of this is shown below.

The image shows a musical score for three staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, and Viola. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is common time (C). The score illustrates the use of chain suspensions. In measure 1, Violin 1 has a half note G4, Violin 2 has a half note F4, and Viola has a half note E4. In measure 2, Violin 1 has a half note G4, Violin 2 has a half note G4, and Viola has a half note F4. In measure 3, Violin 1 has a half note G4, Violin 2 has a half note A4, and Viola has a half note G4. In measure 4, Violin 1 has a half note G4, Violin 2 has a half note B4, and Viola has a half note A4. In measure 5, Violin 1 has a half note G4, Violin 2 has a half note C5, and Viola has a half note B4. In measure 6, Violin 1 has a half note G4, Violin 2 has a half note D5, and Viola has a half note C5. The chain suspensions are indicated by the fact that the notes in each staff are sustained across measures, creating a sense of tension and release.

Example 24 – Linley Concerto, 1st movement, mm. 1-5, use of chain suspensions

In the second movement, Linley largely abandons the harmonic simplicity of his outer movements, and shows hints of the expressive and dissonant harmonies characteristic of the mature Classical style. In particular, diminished chords, such as those shown in example 25, are used to add poignancy. Despite the increased harmonic tension in this movement, however,

Linley's harmonies are basic compared to those in contemporaneous works by Haydn and Mozart.



Example 25 – Linley Concerto, 2nd movement, mm. 12-15 (piano reduction)

Thomas Shaw's concerto displays more harmonic interest than both Linley's and Brooks's. While his overall harmonic schemes are fairly standard, he is noticeably more liberal in his use of dissonances and chromaticism. In addition, there are some creative passing modulations that one usually associates with composers such as Mozart, particularly in the development section of the first movement. The passage below, taken from the development section of the first movement, includes a move to E minor via a Neapolitan Sixth chord, probably the most exotic chord in the group of English concertos in this study.



Example 26 – Shaw Concerto, 1st movement, mm. 136-143

Samuel Wesley's concertos employ more chromaticism than any of the other English concertos and contain, as expected, the most Baroque influences. His chromatic sequences, in particular, sound slightly out of place for a galant-style composition. In addition, Wesley's modulatory schemes are more adventurous than those of his English colleagues, and passing modulations occur more frequently. However, smooth facility in modulation was not one of Wesley's strengths when he wrote these concertos, perhaps due to his relative inexperience (he wrote all of his violin concertos between the ages of thirteen and nineteen). The following modulation from G minor to G major, taken from the second movement of his first concerto, sounds slightly awkward to say the least.

Violin

Violin 1

Violoncello

Maggiore

Example 27 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 2nd movement, mm. 116-119

To avoid drawing the listener's attention away from the melody, bass lines in galant-style compositions are usually simple, and consist of repeated bass notes or simple figurations that outline the prevalent harmony in a discreet manner. Wesley, however, occasionally writes running bass lines with rapid eighth notes that are highly reminiscent of the Baroque style (a representative instance is shown in example 28). In addition to moving the emphasis from the melody back to the bass, these running bass lines also highlight the increased harmonic activity of Wesley's concertos in comparison with those by his English compatriots.

Vln.

Vcl.

Example 28 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 3rd movement, mm. 78-83, running bass line

Orchestration

In all of the English concertos, the orchestral texture is dominated by a four-part string section comprised of first violins, second violins, violas, and cellos/double basses.⁴⁶ In the tutti sections, the first violins are the most prominent, as they almost always carry the melody. The other parts are very much accompanimental and thematically insignificant.⁴⁷ String sections in the eighteenth century were much smaller than they are today, and it would not have been unusual to have just one player on each part. For example, the orchestra that the Wesley family employed for their house concerts contained only eight players: one first violin, two second violins, one viola, one cello, one on each horn part, and his brother Charles on keyboard when necessary.⁴⁸

In the vast majority of the English concertos, wind instruments are added to complement the strings. However, their parts are sparse and insignificant; they play only during *forte* tutti passages, and remain silent in most solo sections and slow movements. They primarily play long sustained tones that outline the harmony, and reinforce the strings during climactic cadential passages.

The incorporation of winds into violin concertos, and indeed into symphonic repertoire in general, was a relatively new phenomenon that was considered unusual as late as 1750. Over the next decade, some composers began inserting a pair of horns. They were often marked *ad libitum*, however, which meant that they could be dispensed with if the players were not easily available. By the mid-1760s, the inclusion of two oboes as well as two horns became standard in

⁴⁶ In Wesley's first two concertos, there are separate parts for cellos and double basses, creating a five-part string texture.

⁴⁷ Exceptions can occasionally be found in Wesley's concertos, where the composer sometimes writes contrapuntal textures with a short motive passing around the different string parts.

⁴⁸ John Irving Schwarz Jr., "The Orchestral Music of Samuel Wesley," (PhD diss. University of Maryland, 1971), 39.

Paris, due in most part to Gavinies's employment of this combination in his six popular violin concertos.⁴⁹ This soon became the customary configuration in violin concertos throughout Europe. Occasionally, flutes were used instead of oboes, although the latter were generally preferred due to their more penetrating tone.⁵⁰ Despite the gradual inclusion of wind instruments, however, violin concertos without winds continued to be written well into the 1780s. Therefore, the absence of wind instruments does not automatically render a concerto old-fashioned.

Wesley's concertos perfectly illustrate this chronological evolution in instrumentation. His first concerto contains strings only, but he includes a pair of horns from his second concerto onwards. In his seventh and final concerto, a pair of oboes is included in addition to the two horns. Shaw's concerto contains the customary two horns and two oboes, while Brooks's concerto replaces the two oboes with two flutes. Linley's concerto is slightly unusual in that he includes two bassoons in addition to the two horns. The bassoons here play the role of a bass instrument, and often double the cello part. Sometimes, the bassoon part is not even written out in the score. In mm. 33-42 of the first movement, Linley merely writes *col bassi* over the bassoon part, indicating that the bassoon should double the basses (and cellos).

The orchestral texture is usually reduced during solo sections, presumably to allow the soloist to be heard more easily. In Baroque concertos, it was customary for the soloist to be accompanied by the continuo instruments only, with the remainder of the orchestra dropping out. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, this practice had become obsolete, perhaps due to the shift of emphasis from the bass line to the melody. Giuseppe Tartini often accompanied the soloist with only two violins, thus creating a lighter texture that was very much in keeping with

⁴⁹ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 45.

⁵⁰ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 149.

the new galant principles. Most of his compatriots and disciples, however, did not follow this trend, perhaps finding it to be an overreaction. Later Italian composers, such as Gaetano Pugnani and Felipe Giardini, often accompanied the soloist with two violins and cello, omitting only the viola. This three-part texture became the norm for composers all across Europe by the 1770s.⁵¹

The English concertos show much variety in their accompaniment textures. The only constant seems to be that, in keeping with continental preference, violas are generally omitted during solo sections.⁵² There is evidence that character and tone colors were taken into consideration when determining the accompaniment texture. This is most aptly illustrated in the second movement of Wesley's first concerto, a set of theme and variations based on Thomas Linley Sr.'s aria *When Wars Alarmed*. In the first variation, the soloist plays a lightly ornamented version of the theme in *pianissimo*, accompanied by two violins. This creates a light and airy texture well-suited to the intimate quality of the solo violin part. In the second variation, written in the tonic minor, the second violins are replaced by the cellos, perhaps to darken the tone in response to the modal shift. On rare occasions, the full orchestra is used to accompany the soloist. The second movement of Linley's concerto is one such occasion. Presumably, Linley was trying to create a darker and more sonorous sound to suit the somewhat somber character of the movement.

Whether these concertos were intended to be performed with basso continuo is not immediately obvious. While it is commonly acknowledged that basso continuo continued to be used throughout the eighteenth century and even into the nineteenth century, it is also clear that its role diminished in importance with the advent of the new galant style. The galant style's new

⁵¹ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 57.

⁵² Wesley's first concerto forms the sole exception to this, perhaps because as a thirteen-year-old boy, he had yet to assimilate the prevailing conventions in the rest of Europe.

emphasis on melody called for accompaniments that were as simple and unobtrusive as possible, and an over-elaborate continuo part could detract the listener's attention from the melody.

Additionally, the harmonic momentum that the basso continuo provides is less crucial in the new galant style than it was in the harmonically-driven Baroque style.

Further reducing the basso continuo's necessity was an evolution in the mid-eighteenth century regarding leadership responsibilities within the orchestra. During the Baroque period, the harpsichord player had a secondary role of holding the orchestra together and serving as the "leader" of the orchestra. In the Classical period, this responsibility was shared with, if not assumed by, the first violinist. In violin concertos, leadership from the harpsichord player became redundant because the soloist often served as the leader of the group, particularly when the soloist was the composer himself. Contrary to modern practice, the soloist did not rest during the tutti sections in Classical concertos, but rather joined in with the orchestra, playing the first violin part. Leadership from the soloist could thus be without interruption.⁵³

Evidence of basso continuo in the English concertos under consideration is scant. Direct evidence can be found in the scores of only two concertos: Wesley's first concerto, which contains figures below the bass part, and Wesley's fourth concerto, which contains an *organo* part, probably intended to be played by his brother Charles. Furthermore, all of the concertos are written in such a way that the harmony makes complete sense without continuo. Lack of evidence of the continuo's existence, however, does not necessarily imply its absence. Eighteenth-century theorists, particularly those from north Germany, often lamented the lack of figures in most new compositions, stating that they were necessary to produce a good continuo

⁵³ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 50.

part.⁵⁴ In addition, many musicologists believe that continuo continued to be used in the late eighteenth century solely because it had for so long been customary to do so.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ White, *From Vivaldi to Viotti*, 50.

⁵⁵ Owain Edwards, "Revolution in Eighteenth-Century Music," *History Today* (Nov. 1968): 758.

PART THREE

Violinistic Elements of the Concertos

Overview

In general, Classical violin concertos are technically more challenging than Baroque violin concertos, most likely due to the substantial increase in the number of professional players over the course of the eighteenth century. The technical gulf between professional and amateur players had become quite significant. Many virtuosos from the eighteenth century, such as Italians Giuseppe Tartini and Arcangelo Corelli, are still held in high esteem today for their technical supremacy and innovation. In contrast, eighteenth-century amateur players generally possessed a very rudimentary technique, far below the level of the average player nowadays. This is reflected in the vast contrast in technical level between treatises for the instruction for amateurs and those for advanced players.¹ When English composers began to adopt the new galant style initiated by Johann Christian Bach, the increased technical difficulties of the new compositions became insurmountable for most amateurs, and led eventually to the disappearance of many amateur music societies in favor of large professional concerts. In addition, the publication of instructional treatises around 1750 by leading violinists such as Geminiani and Leopold Mozart did much to raise the overall level of playing by making the best techniques and methods available to a much wider audience.

Although all of the English concertos being examined are highly virtuosic, the variety and range of violinistic techniques employed are quite limited. In terms of left hand technique, these compositions seem to rely on the repeated use of generic passagework with little thematic

¹ David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing, from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 357.

significance. The range of right hand techniques in evidence is even smaller. The creative use of articulations and bow strokes that characterize concertos from the French school is conspicuously lacking in the English concertos.

Left Hand Technique

The upper registral limit for eighteenth-century violin repertoire was generally seventh position. This is confirmed by the treatises of Leopold Mozart and Geminiani, both written in the mid-eighteenth century, which describe the usual limit for good players as a''' (seventh position on the E string).² In exceptional cases, however, this limit was exceeded. For example, in the fiendishly difficult *Caprices* from Locatelli's *L'Arte del violin*, op. 3, positions as high as the sixteenth were required.

All of the English concertos use high positions frequently. Positions up to the seventh are used extensively, whereas positions higher than the seventh tend to be reserved for occasional dramatic moments. High positions are most often found in the outer movements, where the brighter sound of the violin's high register complements the brilliant character of the movement. In slow movements, where beauty of sound is of utmost importance, high positions are seldom used. In comparison to Viennese concertos, English concertos use high positions more frequently, as they are more geared towards virtuosic display. In the case of the English concertos the performer is in most cases the composer himself, so the technical demands tell us a little about their own strengths as violinists.

Of all the concertos examined in this study, the one by Thomas Linley shows the most technical virtuosity and the most extensive use of high positions, not surprising given that as

² Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 338.

previously discussed, Linley was Bath's most prized prodigy and possessed extraordinary talents on the violin. However, another factor to be considered is that he was influenced by Italian concertos during his three year stay in Florence between 1767 and 1770. Compositions from the Italian violin school are renowned for their incredible technical difficulties, most notably Locatelli's Op. 3 concertos, which are some of the most difficult violin works before Paganini.

While Linley's concerto is not alone amongst the English concertos in using high positions extensively, it is particularly difficult because most of its high passages do not stay in one position for very long. This is especially true in the development of the first movement, which contains many relentless sixteenth-note passages that require constant shifting between high positions. Linley also makes frequent use of extensions, which are always somewhat difficult to play in tune as they involve drawing fingers out of their natural positions. However, this posed no problem to Linley apparently, who dared to use extensions even in the highest and fastest passages. In example 29, taken from the concerto's first movement, the A on the fourth beat requires an extension of the fourth finger. In example 30, also from the first movement, an extension of a fourth beyond the normal limit of the hand is required to reach in top C on the fourth beat of m. 75.



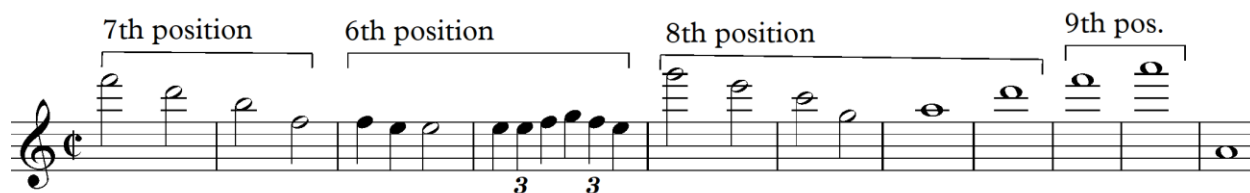
Example 29 – Linley Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 66-68



Example 30 – Linley Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 74-76

Although he was proficient on the violin, Samuel Wesley's professional reputation stemmed primarily from his organ playing and his work with church music, which perhaps explains the comparatively conservative violinistic approach of his concertos. There is, however, a gradual progression in technical difficulty over the course of his seven concertos. His first concerto, written at the age of thirteen, is by far the easiest in the set. As well as making very little use of high positions, Wesley greatly reduces the need for shifting by remaining in the same position for a very long time, even in the lowest registers.

Despite the concerto's unadventurous nature, however, high positions can still be found, albeit very occasionally. Wesley uses two techniques that make the playing of high positions more manageable in this concerto. Firstly, he approaches high positions with scales or other passagework rather than leaping up to them suddenly from lower positions. Secondly, Wesley employs a technique that can also be found in James Brooks's concerto, in that he slows down the rhythm in high passages in order to make them more manageable. There are many fast and fiery virtuosic passages in eighth notes in the first movement, but all of them remain in third position or below. On the rare occasions when he does go further up the fingerboard, longer note values are used, as seen in example 31, where half notes are used for seventh and eighth positions in mm. 380-387, and whole notes are used for ninth position in mm. 388-389.



Example 31 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 1st mvt, mm. 380-390

Despite being written only several months after his first concerto, Wesley's second concerto already shows a more daring approach violinistically. It uses high positions more frequently, and exhibits more imagination in terms of the figuration of its passagework. Examples 32 and 33, the two highest and most difficult passages from the concerto's first movement, are more challenging than anything from his previous concerto. However, their relatively straightforward ascents, coupled with the fact that they remain comfortably in position once the summit is reached, mean they remain reasonably manageable. Example 34 shows one of the only extensions found in the concerto - a relatively straightforward one of a tenth on the last note of measure 232.



Example 32 – Wesley Concerto No. 2, 1st mvt, mm. 87-91



Example 33 – Wesley Concerto No. 2, 1st mvt, mm. 214-217



Example 34 – Wesley Concerto No. 2 1st mvt, mm. 231-233

Wesley's third and fourth concertos, written over a year later, are more technically complex still. The third concerto, in particular, shows a markedly increased vocabulary of figurations, as well as a more imaginative use of the violin's timbre by more effectively utilizing its different registers.

Particularly notable in Wesley's third concerto is his penchant for octaves, as shown in examples 35 and 36 below. In addition, Wesley uses in this concerto more extensions than he did in his first two concertos. Example 37, for instance, requires an interval of a diminished fifth between the first and fourth finger on the E string.



Example 35 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 110-112



Example 36 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 3rd mvt, mm. 69-71



Example 37 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 69-71

The last three of Wesley's concertos are significantly more difficult than his earlier works, and call for considerably more frequent and difficult shifts as well as extensions. Their most important innovation, however, is the increased use of large leaps into high positions without preceding them with scales or other passagework.

This characteristic is not exclusive to Samuel Wesley's works. Rather, it is indicative of the general trend in violin repertoire at the time. Indeed, this development was so widespread that it necessitated changes in the violin grip. There were two methods of holding the violin in the early eighteenth century, which were: (a) to hold it at the collarbone or braced against the neck without the involvement of the chin, or (b) to secure the instrument with the chin or jawbone.³ Method (a) requires the constant support of the left hand to hold up the instrument, but the constant shifting now required in the new repertoire meant that it became impractical. Method (b), where the instrument is secured with the chin, thus became popular. Leopold Mozart is explicit in his treatise regarding his opinion on this matter. "There are mainly two ways of holding the violin," he says, "unsecured shoulder position and that steadied by the chin." He strongly recommends the latter.⁴

In the soloist's first entrance in the fifth concerto, the increased need for shifting is immediately evident. The first theme, shown in example 38 below, lies awkwardly on the E

³ Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 368.

⁴ Ibid., 369.

string between third and seventh positions, and requires constant shifting between these positions. Its difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that it is in B-flat major, a very uncomfortable key for the violin as it does not have the advantage of having the tonic or the dominant on one of the violin's open strings. Examples of the unprepared large leaps now required can be seen in examples 39 and 40, taken from the fifth and sixth concerto respectively.



Example 38 – Wesley Concerto No. 5, 1st mvt, mm. 65-76



Example 39 – Wesley Concerto No. 5, 2nd mvt, mm. 11-13



Example 40 – Wesley Concerto No. 6, 1st mvt, mm. 127-131

One of the few things we know about James Brooks is that while Thomas Linley was often acknowledged as one of the most precocious performers known in England,⁵ Brooks enjoyed only a provincial reputation as a violinist. This is perhaps the reason for the simple and undemanding nature of Brooks's only extant violin concerto.

The melodies in Brooks's concerto, while relatively charming and appealing, are basic in design and very straightforward to play. They are without exception written in lower positions (third position or below) and involve little shifting. Most of the technical passages in the concerto also remain in third position or below, with the occasional extension up to e''' on the E string in third position. On the rare occasions when he does ascend into higher positions, he dramatically slows down the rhythm to make their execution easier, just as Samuel Wesley did in his first concerto. This is clearly shown in the two examples below, both taken from the concerto's first movement. In example 41, the sixteenth notes in mm. 117 and 118 slow into eighth notes in preparation for the ascent up to eleventh position, which is reached on the first beat of m. 125. Following this top note, Brooks intelligently inserts a rest to allow the performer time to complete the long shift back down to first position.



Example 41 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 117-125

⁵ Gwilym Beechey and Linda Troost. "Linley." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/16713pg3>.



Example 42 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 205-208

The first two movements of Shaw's concerto are relatively straightforward, and contain only one instance where positions higher than the third are called for. In the last movement, however, Shaw writes many relentlessly fast passages that call for extended use of high positions and awkward extensions.

Although double and multiple stops have been widely used in violin repertoire since the Baroque period, some musicians in the eighteenth century still disapproved of them. English composer Charles Avison, for example, thought that double stops had a detrimental effect on the violin's tone:

Even the use of double stops on this instrument [the violin] may, in my opinion, be considered as one of the abuses of it; since, in the hands of the greatest masters, they only deaden the tone, spoil the expression, and obstruct the execution. In a word, they baffle the performer's art, and bring down one good instrument to the state of two indifferent ones.⁶

Double stops are used regularly in the English concertos to enhance the sonority and resonance of melodies. Thirds were the most common interval, but fifths, sixths and octaves are also used. Sometimes, all of these intervals are used in combination. Curiously, double stops are

⁶ Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 428.

employed for the secondary theme in many of the concertos' first movements. This is clearly illustrated in the three examples below.



Example 43 - Wesley Concerto No. 3 in D Major, 1st movement, mm. 86-89



Example 44 - Linley Concerto, 1st movement, mm. 77-81



Example 45 - Brooks Concerto, 1st movement, mm. 93-96

The practice of writing polyphonically for the violin that was so widespread in the German Baroque repertoire, most notably the solo violin works by J. S. Bach,⁷ had largely fallen out of fashion, as these new galant style concertos are predominantly homophonic in texture. Samuel Wesley, however, still employs this Bachian technique occasionally in his concertos, as illustrated in example 46.

⁷ Although this technique is most commonly associated with the six sonatas and partitas by J. S. Bach, written in 1720, it began to be used intermittently in the late seventeenth century, most famously in Arcangelo Corelli's Op. 5 sonatas.



Example 46 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 188-192

Multiple stops are comparatively rare in these concertos. While isolated three-note chords can occasionally be found, sustained passages of triple and quadruple stopping do not feature at all in these concertos. It is perhaps worth mentioning here, however, that the playing of isolated three-note chords would have been fairly straightforward in the late eighteenth century, as the use of flatter bridges and pre-Tourte convex bows would have allowed the bow to contact all three strings together without too much difficulty. When performing them on a modern bow, it is often necessary to arpeggiate them slightly.

Right Hand Technique

There were many developments in the design and construction of bows throughout the eighteenth century, resulting in a myriad of different bow types. The development of the Tourte model proved to be a turning point in bow design, so much so that we might consider bows divided into two categories: the pre-Tourte model and the Tourte model.⁸ The Pre-Tourte model, of which there were many varieties, was short and light, had a convex camber, and contained less hair than the Tourte model. It was capable of relatively narrow range of bow strokes and articulations. The Tourte bow, largely identical to the bows used today, had a concave camber, which allowed for an even spread of pressure throughout the bow. It was capable of producing a

⁸ Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 166.

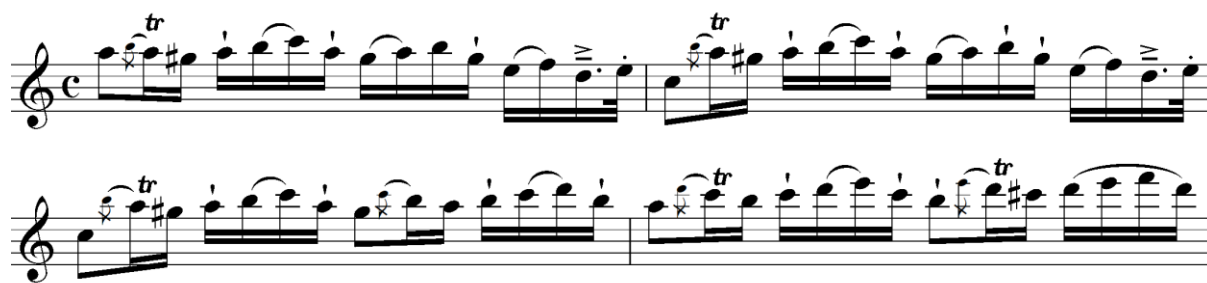
large sustained sound, and opened up many new possibilities in terms of bows strokes and articulation.

Although the Tourte bow was available from around 1780 and was well-liked by those violinists who were lucky enough to own or experiment with one, it was slow in gaining universal approval.⁹ It is probable that the “Cramer” style bow was still the pre-dominant bow in England during the late eighteenth century. Invented by German virtuoso violinist Wilhelm Cramer, it can be seen as a transitional bow between the various pre-Tourte designs and the Tourte design. It was slightly longer than the pre-Tourte bows, but somewhat shorter than the Tourte bow. More significantly, it was one of the first bows to have a slight concave camber in the stick. The hair on the Cramer bow, as was the case with all pre-Tourte bows, was quite loosely-bound, which resulted in a slower response and more softness in attack when compared to the Tourte bow. The concave curvature of the bow stick, however, somewhat compensated for this by allowing firmer pressure on the strings. Michel Woldermar, in his treatise *Méthode pour le violon* (c1798), says that the Cramer style bow was “adopted in his [Cramer's] time by a majority of artists and amateurs.”¹⁰ Considering that Cramer settled in London in 1772, it seems safe to assume that Woldermar’s statement regarding the bow’s popularity was particularly relevant in England.

As mentioned earlier, the English concertos show considerably less variety in bow strokes and articulations than contemporaneous works from the French Violin School. This can be clearly seen in the following example, taken from the seventh concerto of French violinist Pierre Rode, which shows more bowing intricacies than any of the English concertos.

⁹ Stowell, *Violin Technique*, 21.

¹⁰ David D. Boyden, “The Violin Bow in the Eighteenth Century,” *Early Music*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Keyboard Issue 2, (Apr., 1980): 208.



Example 47 – Rode Concerto No. 7, 1st mvt, mm. 61-64

The earlier availability of the Tourte bow in France may have contributed to the French Violin School's seemingly more advanced bowing technique. Since both Tourte and Viotti were based in Paris, it is likely that Viotti would have had access to the Tourte bow much earlier than his English counterparts. When Viotti became an overnight sensation at his *Concert spirituel* performance in 1782, he already had the new Tourte bow at his disposal.¹¹ In fact, François-Joseph Fétis, in his *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, says that “at around 1780, Viotti came to Paris. Soon convinced of Tourte’s superiority over other bow-makers, he asked him to look for a way of preventing the hair from becoming bunched, keeping it evenly spread at the frog.”¹² The fact that the Tourte bow was sometimes called the Viotti bow when it was first invented would seem to confirm Fétis’s statement.

In addition to allowing for more complexity in terms of strokes and articulations, the new Tourte bow design also increased both the quality and variety of tone. Whereas English composers tend to emphasize the brilliance of the violin’s high register in their concertos, the French Violin School used the expressive powers of the new Tourte bow to highlight the singing

¹¹ Bruce Schueneman, *The French Violin School: Viotti, Rode, Kreutzer, Baillot, and their Contemporaries* (Kingsville, TX: Lyre of Orpheus Press, 2002), 12.

¹² *Biographie universelle...*, ed. Fétis, vol. 7, p. 246.

qualities of the violin's low register, taking advantage of the bow's superior ability to "sink in" and draw a rich and resonant tone.¹³ The G string is used much more extensively in melodic passages than in the English concertos. The following passage from Viotti's seventh concerto illustrates this point perfectly.



Example 48 – Viotti Concerto No. 7, 1st mvt, mm. 77-82

Bowings

Compared to nineteenth- and twentieth-century violin repertoire, bowing indications are somewhat rare in eighteenth-century English concertos. The freedom afforded performers in the eighteenth century is greater than that afforded today, and many musical as well as technical decisions are left up to the performer.¹⁴ In addition, many if not all of these concertos were written for the composer's own use, thus eliminating the need for detailed performance indications.¹⁵

¹³ Schueneman, *The French Violin School*, 13.

¹⁴ Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 356.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Further reducing the need for detailed markings are the numerous bowing conventions and rules in the eighteenth century, with which most performers were familiar. The most important of these is the Rule of Down Bow, which was developed by the Italians and the French in the 17th century.¹⁶ Its basic notion is that the down bow is to be used on accented beats, and the up bow is to be used on unaccented beats. Hence the first beat of every measure, unless it is begun by a rest, is always on a down bow. This rule also applies to subdivisions of a single beat. Leopold Mozart's treatise summarizes the rule as follows: "if the first crotchet of a bar does not begin with a rest, whether it be even or uneven time (duple or triple meter), one endeavours to take the first note of each bar with a down stroke, and this even if two down strokes should follow each other."¹⁷

Although this rule appears simple, the actual application of it to music is somewhat more complex. Bowing decisions are influenced by many other variables, including tempo, rhythmic configuration, dynamics, and the character of the music. Many violinists began to show increased flexibility in the application of the rule in the eighteenth century, such as allowing for a down bow on the first note of every other measure in triple meter. Some violinists went as far as to reject the rule completely. Geminiani, for example, states in his instructions to Exercise VIII in *The Art of Playing on the Violin* that the player should "draw the bow down and up, or up and down alternatively, taking care not to follow that wretched rule of drawing the bow down at the first note of every bar."¹⁸

¹⁶ Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 401.

¹⁷ Leopold Mozart, *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, trans. Editha Kocker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 74.

¹⁸ Francesco Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin*, ed. David D. Boyden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 4.

Despite the reservations of Geminiani and others, the Rule of the Down Bow was widely used in the eighteenth century, and remains a good point of reference as regards bowings in eighteenth-century repertoire. L'Abbé le fils and Quantz make no mention of the rule in their treatises, despite having many bowed examples that adhere to its principles, suggesting that the rule may have become second nature to many violinists. In fact, many of the principles of the rule are still in use in violin repertoire today. Mozart explores the issue of bowing in great detail in his treatise, applying the Rule of the Down Bow to different musical contexts, exploring its many variations and nuances, and providing examples where modifications or exceptions to the rule may apply. The example below illustrates the application of some of Mozart's guidelines to a passage from Wesley's third concerto.



Example 49 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 61-65

Wesley did not insert any bowing indications in this passage, but to play it “as it comes” would create an awkward situation where the first beats of mm. 62 and 63, both very much stressed beats, are on an up bow. To solve this problem, we can apply the following two rules from Mozart's treatise:

stressed beats on the “wrong bow.” In these cases, one might consider making an exception to the rule, or reversing the bowings by inserting slurs instead of retaking the bow. For example, one could argue that in example 3a, the retake in m. 1 disrupts the musical line, and that it is preferable to slur the first two eighth notes instead to arrive at m. 2 on a down bow.

Despite the guidance provided by these rules and conventions, there remain places in these concertos where the lack of precise bowing indications causes confusion. Particularly problematic are Wesley’s many contrapuntal passages for the violin, such as the one shown below, where the two voices contain different note values.



Example 50 – Wesley Concerto No. 1, 2nd mvt, mm. 43-45

The sixteenth notes in m. 43 are written without any bowing indications, which suggests the use of separate bows. In m. 44, the whole-note A creates a dilemma as it is impossible to sustain it for its full value and play the sixteenth notes with separate bows at the same time. A possible solution would be to perform m. 44 in one bow stroke, as shown below.



Example 50a

While this allows the whole note to be sustained for its full value, it also requires the sixteenth notes in m. 44 to be played legato. Additionally, the performer is left in the wrong part of the bow - the tip - in the beginning of m. 45. The solution presented in example 50b, where m. 44 is performed with separate bows, remedies both of these issues.



Example 50b

The downside of this solution, however, is that the whole note A in m. 44 is articulated sixteen times, which, aside from being unfaithful to the score, actually sounds quite obnoxious.

Example 50c and 50d present two further solutions.



Example 50c



Example 50d

Example 50c keeps the articulation of the sixteenth notes consistent, but completely changes their character as it eliminates the slight articulation and lift that are present when they are played with separate bows. In example 50d, the whole note is dropped after just one sixteenth

note, which is also not ideal as it eliminates of the drone effect of whole note. The ideal solution is probably the one presented in example 50e where m. 44 is played with two separate slurs.



Example 50e

This solution presents the best compromise between ease of execution and faithfulness to the score. The one possible drawback is that the sixteenth notes in m. 44 have to be performed legato. However, one could argue that by inserting a whole note, Wesley intended for there to be a more sustained feeling in that measure.

In example 51 below, the performer is again faced with the problem of being unable to realize the rhythm in both voices simultaneously.



Example 51 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 189-193

In example 51a, a slur is inserted every two beats. In example 51b, the half notes are played as if they were eighth notes.



Example 51a



Example 51b

While the slurs in example 51a allow the half notes to be held for their full value, they do not allow for the natural non-legato articulation of the eighth notes since they now have to be performed under a slur.¹⁹ In addition, it would be natural under normal circumstances to taper the half notes slightly, since they form the end of the five-note motive. The bowing in example 51a makes this impossible.

The solution shown in example 51b is probably the preferred solution, since it allows the articulation of the eighth notes as well as the natural tapering of the half notes to be retained. While it is true that the half notes cannot now be held for their full value, the performer can create an illusion of a longer note by elongating the first note of each group slightly.

In ambiguous situations such as these, there is rarely a perfect solution, or a solution that is considered “correct.” The performer needs to decide what the best solution is by taking into account the composer’s intentions, technical ease and comfort, as well as his personal musical preferences. This is particularly important in the English violin concertos, since bowing indications are almost nonexistent and ambiguous situations are frequently encountered.

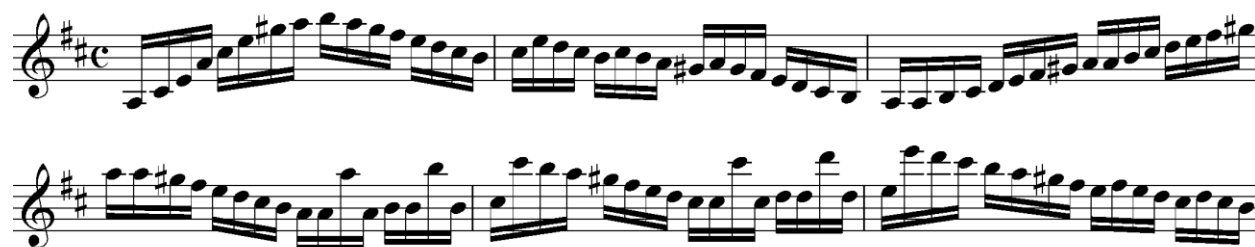
¹⁹ As will be discussed later in the chapter, the “normal” bow stroke in the eighteenth century is an articulated non-legato stroke that is slightly tapered. This is due to the design and construction of the old-style bow as well as the manner of holding and drawing the bow.

Right Hand Virtuosity

Brisk running sixteenth notes are used extensively in these concertos for virtuosic display. They occur most often in the development of the first movement, where the composers aim not to develop thematic materials as they do in symphonic repertoire, but to show off the soloist's technique with idiomatic passagework. Two of these passages are shown below in examples 52 and 53.



Example 52 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 169-174



Example 53 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 104-109

Although the use of fast virtuosic sixteenth notes is a characteristic common to all the composers under discussion, the passages in Thomas Linley's concerto are particularly challenging since he incorporates almost relentless string crossings, sometimes even combining them with multiple stops, requiring a very supple and dexterous right hand. Linley's penchant for

rapid string crossings in his concerto is not surprising given that he was renowned for his bowing technique. The *Bristol Journal* once praised Linley for his “graceful Manner of bowing”, and “Polish of Tone and Manner which renders him the most pleasing Musician”.²⁰ Example 54 below shows one of these highly demanding passages.



Example 54 – Linley Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 123-128

Considering the paucity of bowing indications in eighteenth century violin repertoire and the freedom afforded performers during this period, one can safely assume that slurs, even when they were used in performance by the composer, were not always notated. It is thus acceptable to insert slurs where none are written if the performer deems them to be beneficial technically or musically. In the edited version of example 54 shown below, the slurs in mm. 125-127 were not Linley’s own, but their insertion makes the rapid string crossings between the A and E strings easier by altering the direction of the string crossings to suit the natural rotation of the arm.

²⁰ Elizabeth Wallfisch and Parley of Instruments, *English Classical Violin Concertos*, recorded Jan. 8th-10th (London: Hyperion, 1996), Compact disc.



Example 54a – Linley Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 123-128

In the following passage from Shaw's concerto, a slur could be added to the first two sixteenth-notes of m. 64 for the same purpose:



Example 55 – Shaw concerto, 3rd mvt, mm. 62-67

Staccato Strokes

The Grove Dictionary of Music defines *staccato* as a note that is “usually separated from its neighbors by a silence of articulation.”²¹ In modern violin literature, the term *staccato* has a very specific meaning, and is used to describe a series of non-legato *martelé*-like strokes that are performed under one bow stroke. Sometimes, a distinction is made between “solid staccato,” where the bow remains on the string throughout, and “flying staccato,” where the bow is lifted

²¹ Geoffrey Chew and Clive Brown. "Staccato." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, accessed November 27, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/26498>.

off the string between each note. Individual non-legato bow strokes do not generally employ the term *staccato*, and are variously called *martelé*, *spiccato*, *collé*, or *sautillé* depending on their manner of execution. In contrast, the term *staccato* was used in the eighteenth century in the general sense as defined by the Grove dictionary, and acts as an all-embracing term for separated strokes of all kinds.

The “normal” stroke in eighteenth century violin repertoire, or the stroke that is used when no articulation markings are present, is an articulated non-legato stroke that is slightly tapered.²² This contrasts with the “normal” stroke in nineteenth- and twentieth-century repertoire, which is a legato stroke with smooth bow changes and even weight throughout the entire stroke. This difference is due partly to the design and construction of the old-style bow, and partly to the manner of holding and drawing the bow. When a degree of articulation greater than that found in the “normal” stroke is desired, eighteenth-century composers used a staccato sign.²³

The two most common staccato signs are the vertical stroke (') and the dot (•). A third symbol, that of a wedge (▼), is sometimes used, but it is usually understood to be synonymous with the stroke. Whether the stroke and the dot are one and the same thing is a matter of great contention. While many argue that they are different, the inconsistency with which many composers used the two symbols makes their precise definition very difficult. To exacerbate this predicament, the symbols are often used arbitrarily by uninformed publishers. This is clearly illustrated in the following two examples, which show the same passage, taken from the first movement of Brooks’s concerto, in two different editions.

²² Stowell, *Violin Technique*, 167.

²³ Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 411.



Example 56 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 4-10 (1792 edition)



Example 57 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 4-10 (1996 edition)

In the 1792 edition, the three-note motive that appears in mm. 4, 9, and 10 contains strokes. However, when the same motive appears in m. 5, dots are used instead. This appears to be an oversight by either Brooks or the publisher, rather than a desire for a different articulation. In the 1996 edition, the publisher completely disregards any distinction between strokes and dots, and uses dots exclusively. The slurs over the notes are also left out. Although neither edition is perfect, we can safely assume that the 1792 edition represents Brooks's intentions more accurately than the 1996 edition since it was published during Brooks's lifetime at his own expense.

The fact that Brooks took the trouble to use both strokes and dots in his concerto, as shown in the 1792 edition, would seem to indicate that, at least to some composers, they are two

distinct symbols. Samuel Wesley also uses both strokes and dots in his concertos, although only strokes are found in Thomas Linley's concerto. An examination of contemporary treatises reveals a myriad of opinions on this issue. Quantz discusses this issue extensively in his treatise *On Playing the Flute*. He argues that where strokes are indicated, the bow is to be lifted off the string, and the note held for half as long as their written value.²⁴ Notes with dots, he says, must be "articulated or attacked with a short bow, but must not be detached."²⁵ Leopold Mozart, on the other hand, mentions merely that the stroke indicates a "strongly accented [bow] stroke and separated one from another,"²⁶ and should be executed "without dragging the bow." No mention is made of the lifting of the bow, or of the use of dots.

Upon closer inspection, James Brooks's use of the two symbols in his concerto seems to corroborate with Quantz's comments above. Brooks uses strokes in places where it would make musical sense to lift the bow for a more vital and energetic sound. In gentle and lyrical passages, where a smoother articulation is called for, Brooks uses dots. This is demonstrated by the two examples below. Example 58 shows the emphatic dominant cadence immediately before the secondary theme in the first movement. Example 59 shows the second half of the secondary theme, which is gentler in character.

²⁴ Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (New York: Schirmer, 1975), 232.

²⁵ The term *detaché* or *detached* was used in the eighteenth century to describe notes that are lifted from the string. Today, we generally use the term *detaché* to denote a series of short legato notes that are connected by seamless bow changes. In this sense, the notes are "detached" only in the sense that they are played with individual strokes.

²⁶ Mozart, *Fundamental Principles*, 47.



Example 58 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 24-26



Example 59 – Brooks Concerto, 1st mvt, mm. 96-100

Quantz goes on to say, however, that notes with strokes should only be lifted when time permits, and that “in allegro the eighths and in allegretto the sixteenths are excluded if many of them follow one another: for these must be played with quite a short bow stroke, but the bow is never lifted or separated from the string.” Therefore, it seems likely that when running sixteenth-notes are marked with strokes, as they sometimes are in Brooks’s concerto, the bow would not have been lifted. Instead, the articulation would have come from the natural bounce of the bow, creating a stroke similar to the modern day *sautillé*.

Slurred staccatos, where notes with dots or strokes are written under a slur, can also be found in these concertos. The difference between strokes and dots appears to be more clearly defined here than with single staccato notes. Quantz says that slurred staccato with dots are to be played on the string, whereas slurred staccato with strokes should be played off the string. Leopold Mozart, in his treatise, largely concurs with Quantz, and makes the following comments:

It happens also that under the circle, or, if the circle be under the notes, over the same, dots are written under or over the notes. This signifies that the notes lying within the slur are not only to be played in one bow-stroke, but must be separated from each other by a slight pressure of the bow. If, however, instead of dots small strokes be written, the bow is lifted at each notes, so that all these notes within the slur must be taken in one bow but must be entirely separated from each other.²⁷

Slurred staccatos occur infrequently in the English concertos, and are mostly restricted to two or three notes. Example 60 shows their use in Wesley's third concerto.



Example 60 – Wesley Concerto No. 3, 1st mvt, mm. 110-112²⁸

Longer slurred staccatos are used frequently in the tutti string parts in Wesley's concertos, and are notated with dots in almost all cases. This soft *portato*-like effect forms a beautiful backdrop for the soloist to soar over. In many cases, the notes are of the same pitch,

²⁷ Mozart, *Fundamental Principles*, 45.

²⁸ Although Wesley only writes slurred staccato for the first group of octaves, it is generally understood in eighteenth century notation that when a series of the same figure occurs of which only the first contains a particular marking, the rest of the figures are to be performed in the same manner.

which some treatises consider a sub-category of slurred staccato called *tremolo*.²⁹ The effect, though, is exactly the same as a slurred staccato.

The variety of staccato strokes found in the English concertos is considerable. Unfortunately, the exact manner of execution intended by the composer is often shrouded in mystery, since we do not have a definitive description of staccato notations and techniques from the late eighteenth century. In ambiguous situations, the performer would be well-advised to examine the available documentation and to exercise his/her best judgment.

Legato Strokes

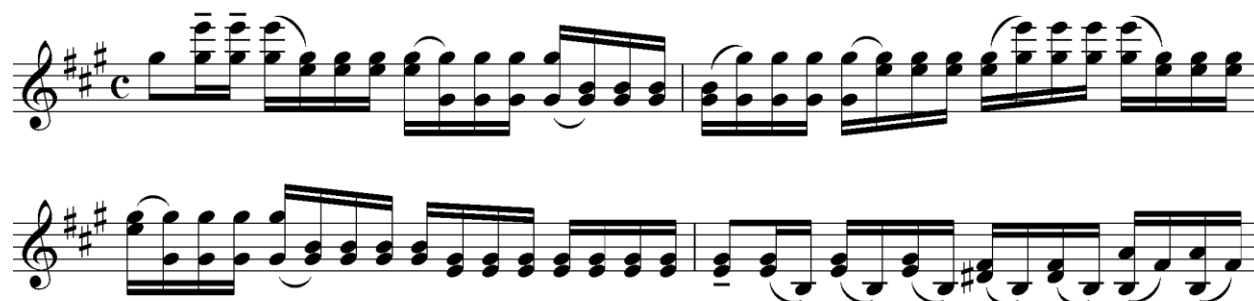
As mentioned previously, the “normal” stroke in eighteenth century repertoire is articulated and non-legato due to the design of the bow as well as the manner of holding it. There is evidence to suggest, however, that particularly in slow passages, players aimed to minimize the separations between the notes, and to imitate the legato and cantabile style of the human voice as much as possible. Galeazzi, for example, says that “In an Adagio, the aim must be above all to play with uniformity of tone note only with the [left] hand but also with the bowing as *legato* as possible.”³⁰ Galeazzi’s comment here is particularly applicable to the concertos’ slow movements, all of which are very song-like in character.

²⁹ Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 422.

³⁰ Stowell, *Violin Technique*, 170.

Double Stops

Aside from bowing issues in contrapuntal passages as discussed above, double stops in these concertos do not present any difficulties in terms of bowing technique, since they mostly occur on melodic passages that are moderate in tempo. Virtuoso double stop passages, such as the one shown below from a Viotti concerto, do not feature at all in the English concertos.



Example 61 – Viotti Concerto No. 22, 1st mvt

There are many passages of block chords in these concertos that were designed to be performed in an arpeggiated fashion. Sometimes, the precise method of arpeggiation is indicated in the beginning of the passage, as shown in example 62. In other cases, the performer is left to decide the manner of arpeggiation according to his/her good judgment.



Example 62 – Wesley Concerto No. 4, 1st mvt, mm. 71-73

CONCLUSION

The significant differences between the English concertos indicate that stylistically, there was no “English school of violin concertos” as such. A unique English style of composition did not exist in the eighteenth century, as native composers mostly imitated imported idioms. However, there are several generalizations that can be made regarding the English concertos under examination.

Firstly, all the English concertos are highly virtuosic; and since they were written primarily for personal use, we can safely conclude that the composers were excellent violinists who possessed supreme technical skills. While the concertos did not introduce any novel violinistic techniques, their constant display of virtuosity is rare in pre-Classical concertos.

Secondly, it is clear that the English concertos were not at the forefront of musical, or at least compositional, innovation. When one thinks of Classical violin concertos, the contributions of Mozart, and to a certain extent, Haydn, spring immediately to mind. Mozart’s concertos are known for their captivating changes of character, charming melodies, creative harmonies, and innovative formal structures. When assessed under these criteria, the English concertos appear somewhat routine and unimaginative.

The harmonies of the English concertos are generally predictable, and rely heavily on primary triads and formulaic modulations. Furthermore, significant contrast of character within a single movement is rare, and is perhaps the area where the concertos’ lack of musical interest is most obvious. The striking contrasts of character in Mozart’s concertos is perhaps most noticeable in his rondo finales, particularly those in his last three concertos - the finale of his third concerto, a fast and lively dance in 3/8 meter, contains a melancholy episode that calls to mind a serenade, while the finale of his fourth concerto contains a stately rondo theme that

contrasts sharply with the fast and boisterous episodes. The finale of his fifth concerto is perhaps the most dramatic of all, and includes an episode that imitates a Turkish military band, hence the concerto's nickname "Turkish." In contrast, the English concertos display no such variety.

Musical interest of this sort was clearly of secondary concern to the English composers.

The English concertos, however, were not unique in prioritizing violinistic display over musical originality. In fact, with the exception of Haydn and Mozart, the vast majority of continental concertos from that period exhibit a similar tendency. The concertos by Giardini and Cramer, the most popular violin concertos in eighteenth century London, are best described as virtuosic showpieces, while the same could be said for most Italian, French, and German concertos from this period. Viola concertos also show a similar trend. The most prominent Classical viola concertos are those by Carl Stamitz and Franz Anton Hoffmeister, and these concertos are valued primarily for their technical display and only secondarily for their musical quality. The composition of Classical concertos, then, appears to be motivated more by instrumental display than by compositional ingenuity. It seems that Haydn and Mozart actually form the anomaly among Classical concertos in prioritizing musical interest over virtuosity.

Despite the lack of musical innovation in the traditional sense, several of the English concertos contain compositional eccentricities that are noteworthy. Among the most memorable of these are Wesley's quirky modulations and transitional passages, and his incessant repetition of mundane passages. Also striking is Brooks's thematic unity between the movements, a feature that could be considered way ahead of its time, and which is made even more remarkable by the otherwise unadventurous nature of the concerto.

Although all of the English concertos are written in the new Classical style, many concertos, particularly those by Samuel Wesley, also contain Baroque characteristics. Most of

the concertos combine Baroque and Classical formal characteristics in their first movements, and many show Baroque influences in the structures of their second and third movements as well. Additionally, Baroque characteristics can occasionally be found in the concertos' harmony and phrase structure.

Most would consider this continued penchant for the Baroque style to be old-fashioned, a label which implies a certain lack of individuality. There is evidence to suggest, however, that rather than indicating a failure to keep up with the newest musical trend, it was actually an intentional attempt to create musical interest, as it results in a hybrid style consisting of both Baroque and Classical elements.

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